Perceptions of Self in Adults with Literacy Difficulties.

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This study examines the perceptions of self in two groups of adults with literacy difficulties.

The methodologies used include interviews, the repertory grid, Eysenck's Personality Inventory (E.P.I.), Levenson's IPC and self report questions.

The interviews build on, and extend, work carried out by Charnley (1978), the only Ph.D. to date, in the field of adult literacy.

The research pioneers the use of the repertory grid technique in studies of adults with literacy difficulties.

The theoretical framework for the thesis is the Learned Helplessness model (Seligman, 1975) and its reformulation (Abramson, et al, 1978). Learned helplessness can impede learning by affecting self esteem negatively and inhibiting cognitive, emotional and motivational development.

The study seeks to establish (among other perceptions of self) whether respondents exhibit signs of learned helplessness.

The findings include a tendency for the sample to score more highly on neuroticism, as measured by the E.P.I., than the general population established by Eysenck.

All the respondents consider there had been an improvement in their literacy skills.

The majority viewed the 'present self' less negatively than the 'self prior to tuition', as shown by the former being rated nearer than the latter to the ideal self on the repertory grid.

A minority were deemed to show continuing learned helplessness as evidenced by their attributions for literacy failure given in the self report questions, the locus of control orientations on Levenson's IPC Scale and continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid.

This continued learned helplessness, despite improved literacy skills, has implications for the tutors of adults with literacy difficulties. These implications are discussed.

Teaching strategies which could be adopted to overcome learned helplessness are outlined in the final chapter.

I N D E X

Introduction

This study examines the perceptions of self of two groups of literacy students. The motivation for the study arose from the writer's experience as an adult literacy tutor when, observing students over a number of years, she became interested in the possibility of initiating a research project to examine the students' perceptions of self.

The field of adult literacy is an extremely under researched area. This study has built, where feasible and relevant, on the work of Charnley (1978), the only Ph.D. to date, in this area in this country.

The theoretical stance which underpins the design and framing of the hypotheses for this thesis is the notion of learned helplessness. This theory was expounded by Seligman (1975) and developed further by Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale (1978).

Learned helplessness theory notes that a person's behaviour is partly influenced by how much control he perceives himself to have over any situatio in which he finds himself. An important aspect of the theory is the way in which failure is attributed, as this relates to a sense of control. This applies especially in a failure situation, since a particular attribution for failure will be likely to affect self esteem and impede the individual from reaching his full cognitive, emotional and motivational potential.

Therefore, a major concern of this study is the way in which adults with literacy difficulties attribute their failure in this area.

It is an a priori assumption in this study that adults who have been through the education system in this country, attending school for nine, ten or eleven years, and ending their time there unable to cope adequately

with literacy, have experienced a sense of learned helpless in the area of literacy.

The study has sought ways of elucidating learned helplessness in the respondents, as well as examining other perceptions of self. Consideration has been given to strategies which could be adopted by adult literacy tutors to alleviate learned helplessness in their students.

The design for the layout for the thesis was shaped with several considerations in mind. Among these was a desire to make the information as easily accessible as possible. The groups to be studied and the methodologies adopted also imposed their own restrictions.

The work was conducted with two groups. The first group was very small (10) drawn from the literacy classes at which the researcher was a tutor. The second, much larger sample (49) came from different schemes in various parts of the country. The two groups were studied separately, the research being conducted in two phases. One of the advantages of studying two groups of such different size was that it allowed for the inclusion of methodologies usually belonging in either the qualitative or quantitative paradigms in educational research (Rist, 1977). The size of the first sample allowed time to be spent on interviews, which enabled an analysis of the transcripts which resembled the case study approach familiar in qualitative studies. The size of the second sample provided scope for quantitative analysis, including a statistical analysis of data collected using Eysenck's Personality Inventory and Levenson's Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Scale.

A further methodology used - the repertory grid - could be said to bridge the two paradigms because Personal Construct Theory, upon which the grid is based, does not split the cognitive and affective into different domains and the grid allows qualitative data to be obtained but in a way that is open to structured analysis which is favoured by the quantitative approach.

It was felt that using a variety of methodologies would allow for the emergence of perceptions of self across the broadest possible spectrum.

As well as the two groups in the study being examined separately, some of the hypotheses framed for testing with the first sample were expanded for the second sample, so not all methodologies used were applied to both groups. Therefore, one logical way in which to write up the research would have been to treat it as two separate studies.

The writer chose not to do this as she felt that, where relevant, direct comparison between the two groups would be more difficult for the reader if he needed to turn from one part of the thesis to another. It would also have entailed considerable repetition where the methodologies for both groups were the same. Instead, it was decided to divide the work into sections according to the methodology applied. Since two paradigms were being bridged this seemed logical, allowing those most interested in the qualitative approach, for example, to turn to the chapter detailing the interviews, while perhaps only glancing at the chapter giving the statistical results of the hypotheses in the form demanded by the quantitative approach. Thus, the final layout decided upon was as follows:

Chapter One. The Literature Search.

In the first chapter the literature search is reported. The background in adult literacy is documented and aims and objectives and notions of success in literacy schemes considered.

Chapter Two. Hypotheses and Methodology.

The second chapter identifies the hypotheses upon which the study is based and discusses methodologies adopted for the study.

Chapter Three. Interview Chapter.

The third chapter details the design, sample, procedure and analysis and discusses the results of the interviews conducted with the first sample.

Chapter Four. E.P.I., Levenson's IPC Scale and Self Report Questions.

The fourth chapter expands the rationale for adopting the methodologies Eysenck's Personality Inventory, Levenson's IPC Scale and self report questions and discusses the sample, procedure and administration of these.

Chapter Five. Repertory Grid Chapter.

The fifth chapter (divided into two sections, one group in each section) considers the design of the repertory grid, procedure, elicitation of the grids and analysis and discussion of the results.

Chapter Six. Statistical Analyses.

The sixth chapter forms a statistical analysis of the hypotheses for both phases of the study.

Chapter Seven. Results and Implications of findings.

The seventh chapter summarizes the results of the study and considers the implications of the findings. Suggestions are made for further research.

The Literature Search

Research which explores the affective domain and reading achievement has not been as extensive as the correlation of perceptual, linguistic and cognitive factors to such achievement. Athey (1976) has pointed out that while the relevance of the latter domain is immediately obvious some researchers and others are liable to be more skeptical about the usefulness of research in the affective domain. She notes, "By increasing our knowledge of the affective state ... we broaden our understanding of ... total functioning in the academic situation". (p. 352). Intellectual variables do not operate in isolation; they are modified by the individual's attitudinal and personality characteristics and, therefore, both domains need to be given equal consideration in the search for ways to improve reading performance.

Studies in the affective field have sometimes produced contradictory findings. For example, despite a well established link between low self esteem and academic achievement (Calpan 1969, Coopersmith 1967, Cummings, 1971, Lamy 1965, Purkey 1970) there are still studies which find no association between these two variables (Badwal 1969, Beebe 1972, Chang 1976, LaBelle 1970). The problems inherent in this field of research relate to difficulties in defining what is meant by such terms as 'self' and 'self concept' (see appendix I for a full discussion) and the uncertain validity and different item content of the measures of self esteem used. The proliferation of a variety of measurement techniques (see Cohen 1976, for full details of these), many of them researcher designed for a particular project, mean that there has been very little replication of studies. These factors are likely to increase any existing skepticism, and growth in the field could be encouraged by replicating useful research and attempting to standardize measurement techniques where practicable.

Most studies to date have investigated the self concept of school children which means that the technique used may not be suitable for use with adults. To the writer's knowledge only one study, to date, has attempted to develop a self concept measure for use with adults in a basic education programme. (Cunningham 1973). However, the technique was considered by Cunningham to need further refinement before it could be usefully applied.

The literature search revealed that studies, to date, in adult literacy have been limited both in number and in scope. There has been one study to Ph.D. level in this country (Charnley 1978). The present study sought ways of replicating and extending some of Charnley's findings which were obtained using interviews as the main methodology. This study pioneered the use of the repertory grid technique in adult literacy work. How the decision was made to use this technique and how the theoretical framework for the analysis of the data collected for this study was decided upon will become clearer in the following explication of the literature search.

Self Concept and Reading

Research literature shows that good readers have, generally, more positive self concepts than poor readers (Athey and Holmes 1969, Lockhart 1965, Lumpkin 1959, Malmquist 1958, Padelford 1969, Seay 1960, Zimmerman and Allebrand 1965). These studies suggest that important factors relating to reading achievement include self confidence, self reliance and feelings of adequacy and personal worth.

It is also suggested that underachieving readers exhibit negative feelings about themselves and their world and further they are often immature and impulsive. (Athey and Holmes 1969, Brucklin 1963, Herbert 1968, Lockhart 1965, Schwyart 1967, Sopis 1964, Toller 1967, Zimmerman and Allebrand 1965).

Brucklin, (1963) and Sopis, (1964) suggested that the negative feelings of a poor reader apply only to his image of himself as a reader. But Herbert (1968), used the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitt 1965) which includes, as well as a total self concept measure a measure for family, social, physical, personal, moral and ethical self. In a study of fifty, fourteen year olds in America, he found that only the total self concept correlated significantly with reading comprehension. Schwyart, (1967) and Toller, (1967), suggest that as well as exhibiting negative feelings towards themselves generally, underachieving readers exhibit impulsivity and immaturity. Wattenburg and Clifford (1964), suggest that measures of self worth are more accurate than IQ in predicting future academic achievement.

Reading and Counselling

Because of the established relationship between a negative self concept and poor academic performance some attempts have been made to change a pupil's self-concept through counselling. (Bruce 1958, Pigge 1970). A study with particular reference to reading has been carried out in this country by Lawrence (1971, 1972, 1973). Four groups of primary school children retarded in reading were established, twelve children in each group. The four groups were all subjected to a different treatment programme:

group 1 - remedial reading only

group 2 - remedial reading and counselling

group 3 - counselling only, from a psychologist

group 4 - no special treatment.

At the end of six months group 2 showed a significant rise in reading and improved self images as measured by the Children's Personality Questionnaire. Since it was felt impracticable to use trained personnel for individual counselling in this way a further experiment was set up using untrained

persons. The results of this study were not so clear cut and Lawrence suggested that the physical conditions under which the counselling took place and the personality of the counseller were very important. A third study was conducted using four village schools with two matched groups within each school, one group receiving counselling from a person recommended as suitable by the headmaster. In this study there was a significant rise in the counselled group in three out of the four schools. Lawrence concluded that children retarded in reading often have 'unsatisfied emotional needs' which should be taken into account when planning a remedial programme. He felt that counselling could be carried out by 'suitable ancillary helpers', but that the organisation and selection of the children should be carried out in association with an educational psychologist to eliminate children in need of a different sort of help. Unfortunately, no follow up work seems to have been done. However, one of the difficulties inherent in such a task would be defining what constituted 'suitable ancillary helpers', since this is vitally important to the final result. The attributes required do not appear to have been adequately defined in Lawrence's work.

Studies including self concept which are specific to Adult Literacy

Studies of self concept which are specific to adult literacy include Boyce et al (1970), Cunningham (1973), Small (1970), Zahorchak (1977). However, these studies deal with the self concept as one consideration among many others not relevant to the affective domain, which is the focus of this study. Also, the work was carried out in America where there is no adult literacy programme resembling the one in this country, therefore, direct comparisons are not possible.

Berger (1968) in a study of college students with reading difficulties, stressed the importance of promoting a positive sense of identity. Mangieri et al (1977), investigated the relationship between reading ability and self concept of academic ability for 188 black and white male adult basic education students who were grouped according to colour and whether they read above or below their grade level. Tests used were the Nelson Denny Reading Test and the Michigan State Self Concept of Academic Ability Scale. Low reading ability correlated with a low concept of academic achievement which was significantly lower in the case of whites.

Martin (1978), investigated the psycho-social characteristics of 72 students aged between 16-70 receiving adult basic education (ABE) in America. All students were given a self description questionnaire and an educational experience questionnaire was also administered to determine the extent to which the students believed their education was causing them to deal positively or negatively with trust, autonomy, initiative and industry. It is suggested that ABE programmes are doing well in promoting positive psycho-social development and control of 'negative influences'. It could be said, however, that the use of a questionnaire to collect such data gives rather an incomplete picture. The suggestion seems to be that mere participation in ABE is adequate for improvement to occur; this seems an unfortunate notion to foster.

Some of the differences between adults and children are stressed by Cunningham (1973). She suggests that the adult needs to acquire and retain a greater degree of confidence and to experience greater feeling of success. She goes on to note that ABE programmes must perform a socialization, as well as an educative, function. This point is noted either explicitly or implicitly by other studies and should be an important consideration in programme planning.

Hand and Puder (1977), suggest that as well as needing to overcome the self image of being illiterate, other personality factors which interfere with learning are alienation, avoidance, aggression towards authority and fear of school. They stress that in order to achieve, the illiterate has to break out of a 'slough of despair'.

This slough of despair could be described as a feeling of helplessness or a lack of a sense of control of mastery over one's environment. It is an affective attribute which is considered by this study to be of major importance in assessing perceptions of self which could affect progress towards becoming a participating,literate member of society.

It, therefore, seems relevant at this point to consider studies which have investigated how feelings of helplessness relates to academic achievement.

Reading and Locus of Control

The importance of a sense of mastery of the environment in academic achievement is discussed by Bee et al (1969), Crandall et al, (1965), Feshback, (1975), Milner, (1963), Seligman, (1975, 1978).

Coleman (1966) in a large scale national survey conducted in America, suggested that a school pupil's belief in his control over his destiny was more important to achievement than any other school factors measured in the study. These included facilities and teachers.

Studies showing that poor readers manifest less sense of mastery of the environment include Abrams (1969), Blackham (1955), Carter (1964), Taberlet (1958). Entwhisle (1971) hypothesized how Rotter's (1966) notion of locus of control may affect reading. He suggests that, generally, middle class parents teach their children to expect meaning and order in their daily lives and to develop

strategies for coping with any disruption which occurs. It is suggested that such children will view reading as a tool containing its own consistency and order and this will help to create enthusiasm for reading. The alternative is to view reading as one more chore imposed by an authority figure and therefore, the task is not viewed with enthusiasm.

Rotter suggested that children will work harder at tasks if they believe that they, rather than chance circumstances or the teacher, are responsible for the success they achieve. This notion of internal and external control leading to success has been studied in relation to academic work (e.g. Sowell et al, 1979) and specifically to reading by Nicholl 1979. In the latter study 540 New Zealand children in the 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th year of formal schooling were investigated for development of their own success or failure in reading (as measured by teacher's ranking) and their causal attributions for their success or failure in reading. Girls were found to be more highly rated by themselves and their teachers and also more likely to explain their reading performance using internal criteria such as ability.

There are two studies which have examined, among other notions, that of internal or external control in relation to adults with literacy difficulties (Boyce et al 1970, Shearon and Puder 1970). The data for both these studies was gathered in Carolina, USA. In Boyce's study 381 functionally illiterate people were given pre and post tests to ascertain the effect of adult basic education on selected non-cognitive factors. As well as internal/external control of the environment these included self concept and anomia. While positive changes were found in the latter two, the findings relating to control of the environment were felt to be too inconsistent for hypothesis forming. This highlights the problems which are inherent in such data gathering and confirms the importance of an

appropriate methodology for obtaining such data. (The author's study applies techniques which have not previously been used in this field for data gathering. It is hypothesized that a consistent pattern in external/internal control of the environment will emerge).

Shearon and Puder (1970), in a study of 360 students, 34 teachers and a control group of 30, gave pre-tests and post-tests following 60 hours of instruction. They tested, among other concepts, the self concept and internal/external control. They found positive and negative changes in self concept and 'improvement in internal and external control'. These findings conflict with Boyce's study and Shearon and Puder conclude that a longitudinal, evaluative study would only be possible if inadequacies in the current instrumentation could be corrected. As well as the difficulties with data collection techniques there is also the problem of defining what is meant by internal and external control. These problems seem to be overcome by using Seligman's theoretical framework which has clearly defined these terms within his model of learned helplessness.

Seligman (1968, 1975) uses the term learned helplessness to describe the behaviour of a subject lacking a sense of mastery of the environment. Seligman, et al (1978) hypothesized that learned helplessness and its generalizability were dependent on how a person attributed blame in a situation of failure. If the blame was internalized self esteem would be affected negatively, if blame was externalized self esteem would remain unaffected. He added the dimensions stable/unstable and global/specific to the existing internal/external dimensions in order to refine these latter notions. As Seligman's model is so important to the analysis of the data in this thesis his terms will be explained in more detail here as well as in the later relevant chapter.

Seligman (1975) originally used the term learned helplessness to describe an interference with escape avoidance behaviour produced in dogs by previous inescapable shock. Seligman notes, "when an animal or person is faced with an outcome that is independent of his responses he learns that the outcome is independent of his responses." (op.cit p6). He stated that laboratory experiments on helplessness produce three deficits, "They undermine the motivation to respond. They retard the ability to learn that responding works and they result in emotional disturbance, primarily depression and anxiety" (op. cit. p.6). The original hypothesis has been reformulated: (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale 1978) "The helpless individual first finds out that certain outcomes and responses are independent, then he makes an attribution about the cause. This attribution affects his expectations about future response-outcome relations and thereby determines the chronicity, generality and to some degree, the intensity, of the deficits." (p.56). It is important how general the given attribution is because, "a global attribution implies that helplessness will occur across situations, whereas a specific attribution implies helplessness only in the original situation". (op.cit. p.57). This global/specific dimension has been added by Abramson et al, to the dimensions external/internal, stable/unstable, already explained by Attribution theorists. (e.g. Weiner 1974). Abramson et al, point out that "when a bad outcome occurs", the individual can interpret this in several ways. Take the situation in which X failed an examination. Here are some possible alternative attributions. X may say "I failed the exam because I am stupid". Lack of ability is a global, stable and internal attribution, which means that feelings of helplessness will occur across situations. If X stated "I failed the exam because I had a headache" this is a specific, unstable, internal attribution which need not apply to other situations. X may say

"I failed the exam because they set bad exam papers". This attribution is specific, stable and external and need not apply to other situations. If X stated "I failed the exam because it's Friday 13th and that's unlucky", this is a global, stable, external attribution which will apply to other situations occurring only on that day.

Of these attributions the one which is most likely to affect self esteem is a global, stable, internal attribution since this can apply to every new situation. Abramson et al, hypothesize that in order to reach full potential in the cognitive and motivational domains, self esteem should be positive and, therefore, any helplessness experienced should be attributed in such a way that it does not affect self esteem.

Dweck (1975) used this hypothesis to see if it was possible to alleviate a sense of learned helplessness in children who had failed in arithmetic by re-shaping their attributions for failure. Twelve children at two New Haven public schools who were notorious for 'giving up and daydreaming' during arithmetic lessons were divided into two groups. One group was labelled 'success only' (SO); the other group was named 'attribution retraining' (AR). Both groups were given 25 days special training, but the first group received only problems they could successfully cope with - any failure was glossed over or blamed on the problem. The second group were also given the same problems but twice a day they were given problems beyond their ability. When they failed they were told "time's up you didn't finish in time, that means you must try harder". This training of the AR group to attribute their failure to their own lack of effort (rather than to lack of ability) resulted in their showing no impairment following failure in later tests whereas the SO group continued to 'go to pieces' after failure. This result, as well as correlating with Seligman's hypothes:

has interesting implications for teaching adults with literacy difficulties. It may be that, especially where most tutors are part of a volunteer work force (perhaps untrained) well meaning tutors may gloss over problems leaving the student with a negative self concept and a continuing sense of learned helplessness, even within the framework of improved literacy skills. At an anecdotal level it is possible to speculate that this may be one reason why so many tutors report that their students are reasonably competent when working in the company of their tutor but are unwilling to use their literacy skills out of the tutor's company. No study, prior to the present one, has examined learned helplessness in relation to adults with literacy difficulties. But one study, using a different methodology to the one planned for this thesis, has examined the notion in relation to children and reading ability.

Butkowsky and Willows (1979) selected 72 boys from 4 public schools in America in largely middle class areas. They were placed in three equal sized groups of good, average and poor readers on the basis of their scores on IQ and reading tests so that the child's IQ was used as a predictor of his reading potential and his score on the reading test as an index of his reading performance. The children, all boys, were given solvable and unsolvable anagrams, the results being manipulated. Subjects were asked how they thought they would perform prior to the task and on completion of the task they were asked to attribute the reason for their success or failure. 12% of good readers, 13% of average readers and 68% of poor readers gave internal attributions. The hypothesis was confirmed as the poor readers displayed more characteristics indicative of learned helplessness and low self concept of ability. These included "significantly lower initial estimates of success, less persistence, attributions of failure to lack of ability and success to factors beyond personal control".

This notion that the way in which a person attributes his failure, can shape his future sense of mastery of the environment and, therefore, his learning strategies and self concept, seem of fundamental importance to understanding those with learning difficulties. It was decided that Seligman's learned helplessness and attribution model would form the structure upon which the methodology for this study would be fashioned.

Before reviewing the hypotheses and methodologies adopted for the study, brief consideration will be given to the aims and objectives and notions of success which shape adult literacy tuition in this country.

Background to the study: Aims and Objectives in Literacy Schemes for Adults.

The comparatively rapid growth and the particular structure of the adult literacy campaign in this country has meant that only limited attention has been paid to the framing of aims and objectives. This lack of clear aims and objectives has permitted the growth of different contrastive views of success. These views have been influenced by the two main, worldwide programmes in adult literacy, namely, UNESCO and that of Friere.

Although, because of the nature of UNESCO projects there are some variations in methodology and ideology, the basic ideology is economic and centres on producing a qualified work force. The person without literacy is viewed as a problem; the aim is to inculcate literacy skills and success is achieved when this is accomplished. The rationale is summed up by Mahieu (1969), "Because functional literacy is regarded as contributing to development it must be furthered in areas where modernization is in progress and where a high percentage of adult illiterates constitute a particularly serious obstacle to the implementation of certain projects".

Friere's psycho-social approach includes inculcation of skills, but this is not the sole purpose of the programme. The structure of his teaching method reflects this. Words are selected which form 'a minimal linguistic universe'. Next, based on pragmatic and phonic values, using generative words and a generative theme, a basic teaching vocabulary is constructed. Friere's aims include encouraging people to believe in themselves and their culture. This process of 'conscientization' is said to give people the freedom to improve their existential existence. Skills evaluation is not the only measure of success, the 'practice of freedom' and 'critical consciousness' would be evidenced in other ways than the formal achievement tests applied to their reading skills. (Friere 1970, 1972).

The major study of adult literacy in this country, to date, has more in sympathy with this latter approach. Jones and Charnley (1978, 1979) use education to mean 'educare'. The study included the profiles of 68 students as described by 49 tutors, interviews with 35 students and second interviews, approximately one year later, with 19 of the original 35. Jones and Charnley conclude that individuals without literacy skills are happy, well adjusted members of society; "They were not and did not perceive themselves as being problem people" (p. 23, 1978). In defining success for adults receiving literacy tuition they isolate five categories for success - affective personal achievement, affective social achievement, socio-economic achievements, cognitive achievements and enactive achievements. They place particular emphasis on the first of these - the student's feeling of confidence. Their interpretation of the interviews they recorded is that this was considered by the students to be the most important result of their attendance for literacy tuition. Jones and Charnley (1979), conclude that 'real gains may be made in the absence of technical accomplishments' since a person may feel more confident as a

result of participating in adult education, even if their literacy skills have not improved.

Jones and Charnley have carried out valuable pioneer work in this field. However, as no example transcript of the interviews is available for perusal with the Charnley's Ph.D. it is difficult to ascertain how clearly the feelings of confidence were stressed. Interviews carried out by the writer confirmed Charnley's finding that students do stress feelings of confidence. However, by applying to the transcripts the theoretical stance provided by attribution theory and learned helplessness and by cross referencing to the results obtained from the repertory grid study a more complex pattern emerges.

It can be seen that there are two main approaches to adults with literacy problems, one is a skills centred approach, the other is person centred. There is nothing new in such a division in education, both sides have advocates and defined systems of classroom management, both have had a share of popularity. The situation in education for adults remains less clear cut because there has been no clear statement of aims, objectives or needs.

The identification of needs is fundamental to planning useful programmes (Smith 1969). Gorman (1976) suggests that for these adults there are three needs: reported needs, expressed needs and observed needs.

Reported needs are those judged by informed observers to be necessary or useful. These include various tests devised to measure the needs of an adult in society (Bentovim 1974, Harris et al 1971, Merrit 1975, Moyle 1977).

Expressed needs include those to which the learner gives priority and includes the reasons that students have given for coming forward to help

(Gazin 1980, Jones and Charnley 1978, Radcliffe 1976). Obviously, there is a danger here, as Mason-Attwood and Ellis (1971) note; adults stated needs may sometimes be superficial and often adults need asssistance to recognize their real needs.

Observed needs include frequency of usage, difficulty and usefulness of words. (Bullock Report 1975, Friere 1972, Marlow 1954, McNally & Murray 1962, Mitzell 1966, Murphy 1973).

The needs focussed on in this study will be those put forward by the students themselves, but the general situation in adult basic education still lacks clarification. Zimmerman (1972), pointed out that the truism "if you're not sure where you're going you're likely to end up some place else" is particularly appropriate to planning and curriculum development in this field. Kedney (1974), adds "without due attention to the needs ands interests of adult learners and their effective translation into aims and objectives the provider may also end up some place else and alone". (p. 29). This study aims to contribute to this field by detailing some of the needs factors as expressed by the respondents. While recognizing that this gives only a partial picture it is hoped to add useful knowledge to a field urgently requiring research and analysis.

Teaching Methods

The recognition that there is a difference between teaching adults and teaching children has not always been stressed in the literature available to adult literacy tutors. The use of a largely volunteer labour force, not trained teachers, means that most of the advice is concerned with practicalities, such as how to identify specific skills problems presented by the students, or preparing work cards etc. When mention is made of the special needs of adults it can suggest rather a

dauntingly negative attitude, as is expressed by Davidson (1972). He notes, "the cumulative effects of their development, of the environmental and social relationships include a faulty and incomplete development of audio and visual skills, poor perceptual discrimination skills, an impoverished language, a lack of classifying, relating and integrating knowledge and a low tolerance of frustration" (p. 109). Alternatively, Mace (1979) suggested an equally one sided picture of the student with literacy difficulties as a victim of society. Jones and Charnley in portraying students 'not as problem people' offer a further perspective. All these views have something to contribute, but they would perhaps be more valuable if considered as an amalgam.

Adults without access to literacy in a literate society are problem people to some extent. They may also possess some or all of the difficulties summarized by Davidson. But volunteer tutors need most of all to be reminded that the relationship with their student is adult to adult and must rest on a sense of mutual respect and contribution if the student is to continue his studies to an independent conclusion. The paternalistic attitude which may be a function of a satisfactory child/adult learning relationship will not help an adult literacy student to achieve the sense of mastery necessary for him to be able to function eventually without the constant backing of a tutor. Progress will, of course, be slow, but until there is a deeper understanding of adult literacy students and an appreciation of what the role of a tutor entails the picture remains partly obscure. Unless tutors are given a much fuller picture of the perceptions of self held by adults with literacy difficulties it is unlikely that many of them will be fully aware of how aspects of the affective domain may influence the student's learning and general progress.

This study hopes to be able to contribute in this direction.

CHAPTER TWO Hypotheses and Methodology

This chapter details the hypotheses for the first and second phases of the thesis. It describes how the methodologies for the study were arrived at and discusses how the groups of students to be studied were defined.

The researcher's experience as a literacy tutor and the opportunity this gave for the observation of students over a number of years led to the development of a desire to initiate a research programme examining the perceptions of self in adults with literacy difficulties. This interest and the results of a literature search in the field of reading and the affective domain, and adult literacy, led to the design of the study and formation of the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses for the 1st phase of the study.

Hypothesis 1A

The distance between the respondents' ideal self and the self prior to tuition will be greater than that between the ideal self and the present self on the repertory grid. I.e. respondents will view themselves less negatively after tuition than before, as expressed on the repertory grid.

The sample will be selected to ensure they have received tuition for at least one year.

Hypothesis 1B

The sample will score more highly on neuroticism, as measured by Eysenck's Personality Inventory than the normal population as established by Eysenck.

Hypothesis 1C

The degree of neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, will correlate positively with the distance between the present self and ideal self elicited by the repertory grid; those scoring highest on neuroticism being furthest away from their ideal self.

Hypothesis 1D

Those respondents who give continuing negative perceptions of self in the repertory grid are likely to be those who, in the interview, perceived the cause for their past literacy failure to have an internal locus of control orientation. (Internal and external locus of control being defined by Abramson et al's model, 1978).

As well as testing the above hypotheses the first phase of the study sought to replicate and extend some of the findings from Charnley's study in the field of adult literacy, in this country, by conducting interviews with the respondents which examined their perceptions of school, parents, siblings, partner, work, past literacy failure, present tuition, expectation for the future, and impact, if any, on the respondents' life of any perceived improvement in their literacy skills.

The second phase of the study tested hypotheses 1A, 1B and 1C with a larger sample.

In order to clarify links between the repertory grid and locus of control orientations, the fourth hypothesis (1D) was redefined and became two separate hypotheses, 2D, and 2E. It was surmised that if these hypotheses were confirmed it could indicate that the repertory grid may be of future use as an additional methodology in studies of learned helplessness.

The need for such alternative techniques has been stressed by Seligman et al, when they noted, "An important future task will be to develop an adequate technology for measuring attribution expectations". (p.19, 1980). Therefore, it was felt that as well as amalgamating the grid findings with verbal reports, an already established locus of control measure should be used as a confirmatory tool in these hypotheses. The measure chosen was Levenson's IPC Scale (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four).

Since it was not practical to use interviews with the second, much larger sample, self report questions were used to ascertain relevant, verbal information previously obtained by interview.

In order to clarify the hypotheses for each stage of the study, those belonging to the first phase are prefaced with the number one, those belonging to the second phase with the number two.

The hypotheses for the second phase of the study were as follows.

Hypotheses for the second phase of the study.

Hypothesis 2A.

The majority of the sample will show a greater distance between the ideal self and the self prior to tuition than between the ideal self and the present self i.e. they will view themselves less negatively after tuition than before, as expressed on the Kelly Repertory grids.

N.B. All the sample will have received at least one year's tuition.

Hypothesis 2B.

The sample will score more highly on neuroticism as measured by the EPI than the normal population as established by Eysenck.

Hypothesis 2C.

The degree of neuroticism as measured by the EPI will correlate positively with the distance between the present self and the ideal self, as measured by the Kelly Repertory grid, those scoring highest on neuroticism being furthest away from their ideal self.

Hypothesis 2D, part 1.

There is a relationship between closeness to the ideal self, as measured by the repertory grid, and the attribution for literacy failure given on the self report questions. Those closest to the ideal self being more likely to externalise the reasons for their literacy failure.

Hypothesis 2D, part 2.

Those closest to their ideal self, as reported on the repertory grid, are more likely to be those who see themselves as having more control over their own life than either powerful others or chance on Levenson's IPC Scale.

Hypothesis 2E, part 1

Those who internalize their reasons for failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who see powerful others and/or chance as having control in their life, as measured by Levenson's IPC Scale.

Hypothesis 2E, part 2.

Those who internalize their reasons for literacy failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who show no change towards the positive pole on one or more constructs between the elements 'AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES' and 'AS I AM NOW' on the reportory grid. i.e. They will have continuing negative perceptions of self.

N.B. Positive means more desirable to the respondent.

If these hypothese are confirmed they would have implications for the tutors of adult literacy. For example, if continued learned helplessness is indicated by the respondent:

a) Showing a tendency to see chance and/or powerful others as more dominant than the self in controlling their life.

b) Replying to the self report question asking them to attribute their past literacy failure with an internal, stable attribution.

c) Replying to the self report question asking if they perceive an improvement in their literacy skills, in the affirmative.

d) Showing continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid

this will suggest that for some respondents skills improvement alone is not enough to free them from a sense of learned helplessness.

It has been noted that Seligman states that in order to reach full potential students should be free of internal attributions which are likely to affect general self esteem negatively.

The implications of these findings for tutors would be that in incorporating the knowledge of learned helplessness into their teaching model they would have to adopt strategies for teaching which are perhaps more familiar in counselling, where an awareness of the client's affective needs is accepted as relevant. Details of what these strategies might entail will be considered in depth in a later chapter.

Deciding the Methodology

Because of the accepted link between a negative self concept and poor reading and the role of counselling in attempting to overcome this negative self concept, the search for suitable methodologies for this study began with a search of the literature on counselling.

Although the study was not attempting to change the self concept through counselling it was felt that the person centred approach, intrinsic in counselling would be most likely to yield a methodology in which the respondent was as active participant. This was seen to be important in order to obtain meaningful data in a study of perceptions of self in adults with literacy difficulties. A methodology which fitted this criterion was the Kelly Repertory Grid (discussed in more detail shortly).

Most studies in the field of adult literacy to date (e.g. Gazin 1980, Radcliffe 1976) have used questionnaires to obtain their data. These questionnaires are not usually researcher administered and while they can be useful in obtaining certain data (e.g. Gorman, 1979) they are not suitable for yielding the depth of information sought by this study. Therefore, it was hoped that it would be possible to include interviews among the methodologies adopted for the study, since the interview technique overcomes the objections raised by questionnaires and enables more detailed data to emerge by allowing probe questions, elaboration and explanation

Interviews have been used successfully to obtain information in at least one study of adult literacy. (Charnley, 1978). In his Ph.D. Charnley reported increases in self esteem in his respondents and suggested that this increase in self esteem was more important than skills improvement. This writer wished to replicate part of his work concerned with increase in self esteem. But the methodology used by Charnley, of collecting interviews from thirty five subjects and then attempting to interview the same respondents a year later, seemed unsatisfactory and cumbersome for a number of reasons. One of these being the difficulty of tracing the respondents after a year. Charnley was only able to interview nineteen of the original thirty five students and he was in an exceptionally favourable position to elicit general co-operation as he was involved in monitoring

the establishment and coordination of literacy classes at the time of their inception (in the sense that the government provided money for a literacy project. In some areas classes had been established previously).

However, a technique which has been used successfully in counselling and been subsequently adopted in educational research (e.g. Keen 1979, Nash 1973, Pope 1978, Ryle and MacDonald 1977) seemed particularly suitable for this study as it overcame the necessity for two interviews, as well as having many other advantages. This technique is called the Kelly Repertory Grid (1955). As well as overcoming the necessity for two interviews the grid has other advantages. The repertory grid technique describes the world as it is viewed by the respondent, not as the researcher imagines the respondent views it. It is, therefore, useful in reducing researcher bias. It is a technique in which the subject participates fully and it is one of the least overtly directional methods of data collection. Although it has not been used previously in the field of adult literacy, a study using the technique has been applied with children experiencing literacy difficulties. Ryle and MacDonald (1977) found, using this technique with a sample of nine year old boys in England, that those with reading difficulties identified more with their peers than did a matched sample of boys without reading difficulties. Because of the structure of the repertory grid such data can emerge without the necessity for posing a question which may seem directional. It, therefore, gives access to alternative as well as confirmatory data, to that likely to arise from questionnaires or interviews.

In counselling, this established technique is used with clients to elicit perceptions of their past, present and ideal self. It seemed that such a

technique could replicate information sought by Charnley without having to conduct two interviews with each respondent. Instead, the subject would be seen after he had received tuition for some time and perceptions of his past, present and ideal self could be ascertained simultaneously. (The validity of collecting such information in this way is well established in the counselling field, e.g. Bannister and Fransella, 1971). The grids could also yield other perceptions of self from the adults with literacy difficulties which would be pertinent to the study.

However, in order to ensure as much authenticity as possible where the elements were to be supplied, interviews were to be used with the first sample so that areas of concern could be elucidated from the interviews and then presented to the respondents as elements in the repertory grid.

A second reason for using interviews in the first, smaller sample was that it would be possible to spend some time interviewing respondents and, therefore, a direct comparison could be made between some of the findings in Charnley's study, the comparison being more relevant as the same methodology would be employed.

However, it was not considered practical to use interviews for the second phase of the study with a much larger sample. (There were 49 respondents in the second sample. 18 respondents were interviewed for the first sample and 10 also completed repertory grids and Eysenck's P.I.). Instead, relevant information obtainable only by verbal report was ascertained by self report questions.

Having established that interviews, self report questions and the repertory grid technique would be used in this study, further methodologies were sought which could relate directly to locus of control and attribution theory. As the theoretical framework for the study was the learned

helplessness model established by Abramson et al, the interviews could be used in the first phase of the study to ascertain attributions for failure in literacy. Further methodologies were sought which could relate directly to Learned Helplessness/Attribution studies as a confirmation of the verbal findings, and as an additional measure to clarify the possible future role for the grid in learned helplessness studies.

As will be shown, a search of the methodologies revealed Levenson's IPC Scale to be the most suitable measure in relation to Learned Helplessness/ Attribution theory.

Levenson's IPC Scale and Eysenck's Personality Inventory

The locus of control variable which is important in forming the theoretical framework for analysis in this study has been related to a number of other variables. For example, Lefcourt (1980) has concluded that a tendency towards an external orientation correlates with an 'abnormal' personal functioning.

Morelli, and Morelli (1979) used Levenson's IPC Scale (1972) and linked externality on that scale to various measures of irrationality, using a sample of psychiatric patients who were hospitalized. A study by Morelli, Krotinger and Moore (1979) linked neuroticism to Levenson's IPC Scale. The researchers hypothesized that subjects scoring highly on neuroticism, as measured by Eysenck's P.I. would be more likely to believe in an external orientation and would also see chance as being a determining factor in their lives. This hypothesis was confirmed, neuroticism being significantly related to internal control (-27) and chance (.34) on Levenson's scale. Why there is no mention of the relationship to the powerful others dimension on this scale is not clear, presumably because no significant relationship was discerned.

Neuroticism has been linked with learning. It has been suggested that neuroticism can be a motivating factor in intellectual achievement. (Lynn et al, 1961). Others (see above) have suggested it is a factor in under-achieving. These later findings linking neuroticism with locus of control suggest that perhaps the latter is more likely. Since Eysenck's Personality Inventory is a well validated personality measure it was decided to administer this inventory to respondents. It was felt it would be a useful extension to the perceptions of self revealed by the interviews and grid. It was surmised there would be no significant difference between the general population and the researcher's sample on extraversion/introversion. But the writer hypothesized that her sample would score more highly on neuroticism. However, she was reluctant to make any further comparison between neuroticism and other variables, such as those made in the Morelli et al study described above. The lack of correlation of all the variables in Levenson's IPC discouraged a replication of that study. Instead, the writer chose to focus on the establishment of neuroticism and a possible relationship between this and the ideal self on the repertory grid. It was hypothesized that those who scored highly on neuroticism were likely to be those who were furthest away from the ideal self on the repertory grid.

It was decided that Levenson's IPC Scale would be used for the second phase of the study if high neuroticism was confirmed in the first sample.

The choice to use Levenson's IPC was a difficult one to make. There have been many studies which have focussed on locus of control, using a variety of measures. The validity of a relationship between locus of control and learned helplessness is, however, well established. Lefcourt has noted "... given descriptions which have been derived from a large body of empirical research, one could conclude that the locus of control is an adequate personality equivalent to the states of helplessness that have been [illegible] research" (1980, p. 248).

Both Lefcourt and Phares (1976) have cautioned researchers about a number of "misinterpretations and misuses of the scales that have been constructed to assess the locus of control variable" (Lefcourt 1981, p.5). Lefcourt notes that there are two types of researchers. One group, labelled by Lefcourt as 'conservatives' have tended to reify constructs and assume that a measuring device is the sole definition of a construct. He suggests that these researchers would be conservative in their choice of measuring device, choosing a method which is 'established, well used and popular', regardless of whether or not it is really relevant to their study. In these cases the most common choice is Rotter's Internal, External Scale (1966). This scale was originally devised to 'assess control expectations' in the following goal areas: achievement, social recognition and love and affection. Because the scale needed to be subjected to factor analysis its final form of twenty three items is rather more global in concept. Lefcourt suggests that the use of such a short, general questionnaire to divide people into either external or internal types has led to much confusion. Because it has been used in studies where its application has been expedient rather than appropriate, confused or contradictory findings abound.

Lefcourt labels the second group 'constructivists'. These researchers view locus of control as 'a convenient abstraction describing individuals' causal beliefs' (1981), p.1) rather than thinking of locus of control as 'a real trait to be found within a person' (op. cit.). Such researchers are seen as less likely to make assumptions on the results of findings which accrue from the use of an irrelevant measuring device and are more likely to search for alternative methods, or pioneer their own measuring technique. Unfortunately, many of the devices initiated by this second group are not readily transferable to other studies, so the problem of validity remains.

In the search to resolve the above problems the researcher considered using Rotter's scale but rejected it on the above grounds. Instead Levenson's Internal (I), Powerful Others (P), and Chance (C) Scale (1972) was chosen. Levenson's IPC scale was "designed as a reconceptualization of Rotter's I-E scale (1966)" (Levenson 1981, p. 17). Because it is multidimensional rather than unidimensional it overcomes the objections discussed above in relation to Rotter's scale. The redefinition of Rotter's notions of internal and external in Levenson's scale mean that it is more amenable with the learned helplessness/attribution theory measures of internal/external and is therefore seen as useful and relevant to this study. (For full details see Levenson 1981). The scale has been used with over 500 adults including the general population, undergradustes, prisoners and psychiatric patients.

As already stated, it was felt that it would be unnecessary to introduce Levenson's IPC Scale in the first phase of the study since its use as a confirmatory tool for locus of control orientations depended to some extent on the results of the first phase of the study.

A further factor was the length of time taken to conduct interviews. Because the interviews were very time consuming for the respondents it was felt that the methodologies to elucidate perceptions of self in the first phase of the study should be confined to the interview, the repertory grid and Eysenck's P.I., in order not to impinge too much upon the students' time.

In the second phase of the study Levenson's IPC Scale was also administered but the interview was replaced by self report questions. (Full details of these methodologies are given in the relevant chapters).

The following diagram is included to clarify the range of methodologies used with each sample.

Table showing methodologies used for the study.

method	interview	repertory grid	E.P.I.	self report questions	Levenson's I.P.C.
1st phase	✓	✓	✓		
2nd phase.		✓	✓	✓	✓

The problems encountered in defining the group of students to be studied will now be considered.

Defining the Group of Students to be Studied

Because of the nature of growth in the adult literacy movement, the materials for assessment - such as reading age tests - have been borrowed from schools, where they were designed for use with children. This is not a satisfactory situation for a number of reasons. The reliability of such tests, particularly in relation to the division into sub-skills, has been questioned by Farr (1969) et al. Moyle (1977) has suggested that a more valid test for adults would be one based on everyday reading tasks (see Unsworth (1976). Bormuth (1973) felt that in order to define functional literacy for adults "only those tasks that are commonly needed by all should be included in a definition to be used with a basic literacy programme" (p. 56). As Barrow (1977) points out it is a problem to define reading tasks that are 'commonly needed by all'. There does seem to have been confusion between 'most frequently read' material and 'most useful' material, an assumption being that the former must be more important. A list of the most frequently read material would include (in order) newspapers, non-fiction, magazines, personal correspondence, advertisements, street names, traffic direction signs, television programme guides and words on television. A list of the most important materials includes: dosage

instructions, danger signals, emergency procedures, traffic directions, official forms, job application forms, wage slips, legal documents, first aid instructions and the highway code. The reading age for these tasks varies from 9.00 years to 18.03 years. (Barrow, 1977).

The U.S. National Reading Center's definition of a functionally literate adult is one who has command of reading skills "that permit him to go about his daily activities successfully or to move about society normally, with comprehension of the usual printed expressions and messages he encounters" (Bentovim, et al 1974, p. 437).

Bormouth (1973) suggests that 'literacy behaviour' must include decoding, literal comprehension, critical reading skills and reading flexibility studies. But Barrow (1977) suggests that "instruction in this wide variety of skills cannot easily be given within the limited resources of many existing literacy schemes" (p. 35). He notes that some students may only require a limited sight vocabulary, and tutors should be guided by their students needs. This idea has a place in the teaching of adult literacy and has been successfully launched in some 'drop in' workshops situated in shops in high streets. However, there is a great danger, generally, in accepting only the student's definition of his needs and this is discussed in detail elsewhere in the study.

Macfarlane (1977) stresses there is a danger in separating the idea of literacy into a set 'mechanical skills' on the one hand and 'information to be acquired' on the other. He quotes from Reed (1970) who, in talking of children's reading development noted "I think understanding is of vital importance ... but I also believe that to introduce this second goal before he has learned to read can only confuse him and delay his progress". (Macfarlane, p. 68). This view can be discredited. Much research has

shown that anticipation and prediction of word meaning, based on semantic or syntactic information and expectation,is essential behaviour for a reader (Farnes 1973, Goodman 1969, Siler 1974, Smith 1971). The meaning of words is extremely context bound. This applies also to sentences and passages (Farnes 1973). The different models of reading epitomize the difficulties of arriving at a definition of what constitutes functional literacy for adults.

Powell (1977), points out that literacy is a term which takes on a less concrete meaning the more closely it is observed. He states that "it is a particular society which defines literacy" (p. 3) and suggests that literacy and computational skills are the "cornerstones of the foundation which give the individual the power and the freedom to meet the conditions imposed by society" (p. 3). He states unequivocally, "without literacy a person cannot be truly free" (p. 3). Powell defines five levels of literacy: illiteracy, preliteracy, basic literacy, career literacy and literacy. He notes, "since work is one of the primary functions of being an independent, contributing member of society, career literacy is necessary to become a minimally literate person in American society". (p. 7). The description he applies to the skills required for each of these stages suggests that for Powell a functionally literate person would possess a very high reading age.

In deciding how to arrive at a definition of the group to be studied, various factors were considered. Partly because of the unreliability and unsuitability of available material (Unsworth (1976), Moyle (1977)), and partly because of difficulties in attempting to apply reading and spelling tests to adult literacy students (Jones and Charnley 1978) it was decided that no attempt would be made to collect such data for this study. However, all the

students are adults who have experienced literacy difficulties and have chosen to join a scheme to improve their literacy; to this extent they are defined as adults with literacy difficulties. This definition is very similar to that given by Charnley and Jones (1979) who, in describing the sample for their study, note that it is not possible to apply reading tests and "It is the perception of his inadequcy, attested by his willingness to seek tuition, that includes him in this category". (p. 4). Where test data does exist (Gorman, 1979) it seems the majority of students coming forward are not totally illiterate, but have basic reading skills suggesting a reading age of between 7 and 9 years. This is enough to enable them to attempt to cope, but not enough to enable them to be fully effective. Since, as a BAS report (1973) has shown, to cope with most newspapers and labels on household goods requires a reading age of 14 - 16 years, while various government forms (e.g. family income supplement) have higher requirements. (See Bentovim (1974) for details).

A further important consideration in defining students to be included in the study was that they had to have received tuition for at least one academic year. This was in order to ensure that comparisons on the repertory grid with the present self and self prior to tuition would be meaningful.

CHAPTER THREE The Interview Chapter

The interviews conducted for the study are discussed in this chapter. The rationale for using interviews in this study has been described in an earlier chapter. This chapter outlines the design of the interview schedule and then presents details of the sample, procedure and an analysis of the transcripts, and a discussion of the results. Where relevant, comparison is made with the work carried out in this field by Charnley (1978).

Design of the interview schedule.

The schedule was designed with two purposes in mind:

1) to ask the sort of questions which could replicate or build on information obtained in Charnley's study of adult literacy, (1978).

2) To consider factors not previously investigated which related to the respondents' perceptions of self, particularly the attributions they gave for previous literacy failure.

The factual information to be obtained included age, sex, marital status, employment and the length of time the respondent had been receiving literacy tuition.

Charnley's interview schedule contains nineteen questions. However, many of these appear in note form suggesting that the interviews were relatively unstructured, no emphasis being placed on using the same wording with each respondent. The schedule begins by asking why the student decided to join the scheme and how they heard about it. It then asks about work and how they manage literacy difficulties encountered there and whether they have any achievements using their newly acquired knowledge. He then asks

if they have experienced embarrassment and if this has changed. He then asks for samples of their writing and permission to ask their tutor about their progress - questions which seem strangely placed in the middle of an interview schedule, albeit an unstructured one. He moves on to enquire if the student receives help from the family and then asks 'has your confidence increased?' If the question was asked in this way it seems rather too directional. (This study in seeking similar information asked 'Since starting tuition are there ways you feel different, e.g. at home, at work, with your mates?' Other questions (still quoted in order) were, the respondent's attitude to his tutor, his educational history, the literacy ability of the rest of his family, the sources from which he obtains information (e.g. t.v., radio, newspapers) whether he has time to study at home and lastly, 'general probing of use of literacy by student' (p. 113, 1978). In the second interview one year later, respondents were asked

a) how have you got on?

b) In what way have you changed since joining the scheme, e.g. success in reading, writing, human relationships?

c) What are your hopes and objectives now?

The writer replicated the last three questions, (using different terminology) and asked questions concerning educational background, literacy ability within the family, help and support from home, possibilities for home study. However, the format chosen for the interview schedule was more structured. The researcher considered the wording for each question and used the same phrasing with each respondent. The sequence of questions was also more formalized. As the interview schedule was structured to elicit information covering a comprehensive time span it was decided that the ease with which the information could be recalled would be facilitated by

dividing the schedule into sections concerned with different spans of time.

The first section of the schedule required the respondent to remember back to the beginning of literacy tuition. It was felt that this would probably fulfil the student's expectations and, therefore, not be seen as threatening. The researcher introduced this section by announcing "I'm going to ask you about when you first joined the scheme. We're looking back to when you first came forward for help." It was felt that defining each section in this way would enable the student to be better able to recall rélevant information.

Respondents were first asked what decided them to seek help and how they heard of the scheme. Such information could be useful in future programme planning. The next question sought attitudinal findings relating to the respondent's immediate family. Family support has been seen as a factor in continued attendance for tuition; clarification of this factor was sought. Fourthly, students were asked whether it was reading, writing, spelling or all of these, they required help with. This question relates to the definition of needs, discussed in detail elsewhere. The fifth question focussed on what respondents imagined classes would be like before they attended. It was thought this may give some indication as to why they felt able to come forward for help, since only a very small proportion of those requiring literacy help actually seek tuition (approximately 200,000 out of an estimated population of 2/3 million). They were then asked about their chosen method of study. A unique feature of the adult literacy movement is the opportunity offered for one to one tuition. There are two other methods in common use. One system provides a professionally qualified tutor who instructs a small group of students. An alternative

method is for one qualified tutor to supervise a group where students still work with individual tutors who are volunteers, usually unqualified. When the scheme was launched it was felt that individual tuition in the privacy of the tutor's or student's own home would have strong appeal to the students - this question sought the student's views on this 'anecdotal' assumption. Next, respondents were asked what they thought they would get out of joining the scheme. Bearing in mind Charnley's finding that an increase in confidence was a more important result of attendance at classes than whether literacy skills improved, it was thought useful to ascertain if respondents began their learning with a narrow, skills oriented definition of their goal or whether they envisaged a wider canvas, including changes in feelings of confidence.

The next two questions dealt with respondents' perception of the time it would take to reach their goal and whether their ideas about this had changed over time. In the initial stages of recruitment for volunteers in the scheme it was often not realized that the commitment would probably be one of years rather than weeks or months. The degree of realism of what the student's commitment entailed was sought.

With the final question in the first section focussing on their feelings at present the next section followed logically. However, the researcher advised the respondents "We're going to talk about how you feel now - not how you used to feel". The first two questions in the second section asked whether ideas about classes and tutors had changed with experience and if so in what way(s).

Interviewees were then questioned on their ability to study at home - whether there was the physical conditions, time or inclination. This information could help to show if it was realistic to expect students to work at home.

The next two questions focussed on the respondents' leisure time and sought information regarding any changes in this area, including reading habits. For example, had the interviewee begun to read in his spare time since attending classes? This question aimed to clarify anecdotal evidence that respondents are sometimes reluctant to use their newly acquired skills outside the setting in which these skills were acquired.

The final question in this section, phrased as non-directionally as possible, asked respondents if there were ways they felt different since starting tuition. This question was seen as the equivalent of Charnley's question 'Has your confidence increased?'

The third section covered educational background and was introduced by the researcher saying "Now I'd like to look back to your school days, we're talking about when you were at school". The rationale shaping most of these questions is self evident. Links between the home and the school are well established (e.g. Goodacre, 1968). Questions concerning the family were:

1) While you were at school do you think they knew at home that you had problems with your reading, writing and spelling?

2) Do you think any other members of your family had difficulties with reading, writing or spelling?

Respondents were then requested to give their first recollections of experiencing literacy difficulties and were then asked how they attributed their failure in literacy. As has been noted in detail elsewhere, this latter question elicits information required for analysis within the learned helplessness model. The two questions following asked specifically about the reaction of the school to the respondent's literacy difficulties, in order to ascertain whether the school had offered any assistance. The final

question in this section sought the respondents' general memories of school.

The fourth section of the schedule asked the respondent how he perceived the future. It was introduced by saying "Well, we've looked backwards in time now I'd like us to look forward to the future". The first question asked the student when he felt he would be able to cease tuition. The probe for this question covered three choices: skills, self confidence, tutor advising student to leave. These indicate the rationale for this question, which was twofold. Firstly, to refer back to an earlier question concerned with expectation of what would be received from the scheme. Secondly, to indicate the comparability in importance of these areas for the student, thus giving further opportunity for comparison with Charnley's study, where feelings of confidence superseded skills improvement.

The student's attitude to learning and desired level of attainment were next requested by inquiring if he planned to attend other classes in the future. Finally in this section, further clarification of any changes in the respondent's concept of self were sought by asking him to elucidate any changes in his perceptions of his future life. Respondents were then asked whether they thought there had been an improvement in their literacy skills. If they replied in the affirmative they were also asked if they felt the improvement had changed their life in any way.

Closing the interview with a discussion on their literacy progress was calculated to give them an opportunity to expand on this theme, knowing the interview was ending. The researcher drew on her interviewing experience as a social worker and a counsellor for the timing of this question. It is well established in interview situations in those fields that the interviewee may only reveal his major concerns as he 'walks out of the door' so time was allowed for the respondent to elucidate and expand on areas of concern.

When the conversation was concluded, factual details required such as age, marital status, employment and length of time attending classes, were requested.

In designing the interview schedule the researcher drew on her experience as a literacy tutor to ensure the phrasing of the sentences was easily comprehensible without being patronizing in tone. (See appendix 2 for the full interview schedule and appendix 3 for an interview transcript).

Sample

Thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with an 'opportunity sample' of students attending adult literacy classes run by the local authority. The students were obtained from two groups. One group had been running for over two years, during which time there had been very little change in the structure of the group. The second group was much more fluid; some students had attended for two years, others for a shorter time. Some, but not all of the students, had previously received individual tuition. Both classes were receiving tuition from the researcher.

After these interviews had been conducted it was felt that since all the respondents had been taught by the researcher a certain bias might be present. In order to clarify the position it was decided to conduct further interviews. These students were obtained from another two local authority classes within the borough under the instruction of two different tutors. Five further interviews were conducted. Four lasted for one hour, one lasted for half an hour (see appendix 4). (No significant differences were noted between the replies in these interviews and those given by the groups taught by the researcher). A total of eighteen interviews were conducted.

There were fourteen male and four female respondents.

The age of the sample ranged from 18 - 55 years.

All respondents had received at least one years' tuition.

All interviews were conducted during the first phase of the study.

Procedure

One pilot interview was conducted in January 1980. In order not to reduce the already small sample, a student from another class within the same borough was chosen for this. The method of selection was as follows:

The researcher was invited to observe the class and discuss her research and request an interview during the coffee break. In the event about half the class offered to be interviewed, so the researcher chose the one who seemed to be shiest and least articulate, on the principle that this would be the most difficult interview and therefore, the most likely to show up any flaws in the proposed interview schedule.

The interview was carried out on the same evening using an alternative classroom. It lasted for one hour. The only change made to the interview schedule was to clarify the wording of question 4, section 3; otherwise the schedule remained unaltered.

There were no refusals to take part in the interviews which were conducted with the researcher's students.

The interviews were conducted at the school where the evening classes took place, although the venue was not the classroom in which the classes were usually held. Instead, a domestic science room was used as it provided easy chairs and a less formal atmosphere. Interviewee and researcher sat facing each other in easy chairs in the part of the room which was set out as a dining/living room. The tape recorder was placed on a table parallel to the chairs and the microphone was turned towards the respondent, but

was not obtrusively close.

The interviews were conducted individually and lasted, on average, just over one hour. All interviews were recorded in the evening between seven and nine p.m. during February - April 1980. Each appointment was outside the usual tuition time.

Provision was made to conduct eight interviews with students not taught by the researcher. A total of ten students were asked to participate; there were two refusals to take part.

The venue for these interviews was a classroom. Interviewee and researcher sat facing each other across a table. The tape recorder was placed on the table, the microphone turned towards the interviewee.

The interviews were conducted individually and lasted approximately one hour (except for one interview, see appendix 3).

All interviews were recorded in the evening between 7 - 9 p.m. during June, 1980. Each appointment was outside the usual tuition time.

Analysis of the Interviews.

Each interview was recorded on a taperecorder and the transcription took place as soon as possible after the interview so that all the nuances of body language and facial expression were still clear in the researcher's mind.

Each tape was transcribed, noting the above where relevant.

The tape was then replayed, particular attention being given to conversation that was at first indecipherable. The time taken for this task varied from tape to tape and depended partly on the speaker and partly when the interview took place; sometimes there was background noise from the

other activities in the building. Often this was a task of several hours. When the tape was fully deciphered it was replayed and the pauses in the conversation were timed.

Then the transcripts were compared. Each question on the schedule was noted and the answer to this question on each transcript was considered. The answers were then compared and areas of similarity or difference were recorded.

The final quotations which were used to compile the interview chapter may seem straightforward and the comparisons obvious, but they involve many hours of transcription analysis and consideration to ensure the researcher did not superimpose a pattern where none existed.

The interviews are considered by referring as fully and closely as possible to the words of the students themselves. Although the answers will be commented on as necessary, no attempt will be made, in this chapter, to fit these replies into a previously conceived theoretical framework.(1) The information obtained, therefore, may be directly compared with other studies where relevant (e.g. Charnley). Some questions may not have been covered by previous research and therefore, the simple, straightforward presentation may assist later researchers seeking to add to this field. It also ensures that any new information is easily accessible to interested parties.

The information will be presented under the heading of each question, or where necessary an amalgamation of several question. Each quotation is followed by a number. This gives the identity of the student. Numbers followed by 'a' denote students from the groups not taught by the researcher.

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(1) Although any kind of selection assumes some kind of framework.

The verbal information is clarified by a table giving numerical information about the replies to the interview questions. (see appendix, tables 1 and 2).

How did the respondent's family feel about his/her joining the scheme?

The attitude of other members of the family is an important factor in considering whether the student is likely to be motivated enough to continue attendance for literacy tuition. The commitment of time and effort required is considerable and would be very difficult to attain without family support. There are many reasons why a spouse may not support a student. It could be that a satisfactory, mutually dependent relationship exists and that this would be threatened by the student becoming literate. This may be because one partner is literate and takes responsibility in the situations which arise requiring this skill. The literate partner may feel threatened if this balance begins to change. It may be that both partners experience literacy difficulties, but only one partner wishes to take remedial action. In such cases it could be anticipated that the student would soon 'drop out'.

In the sample those who were married had received encouragement from their spouse. The degree of this encouragement varied:

> "My wife sort of, not pushed me, but, um, advised me, you know, that it would be a good thing". (to go to classes). (3a).

or

> "The wife wrote to them and they sent somebody round". (10)

The greatest amount of pressure is described in the following case:

> "I believe it was my wife more than anything. She said there's this scheme going. Like she says 'why don't you do it?' See? I said 'Not on your nelly I'm not going to do that' ... I said 'in no way'. So she said 'Well I'm going to phone up'. So I said 'You're not because I shall just go out'. Anyway it went on like that say six months, then it cropped up again ... She said 'I'm going to do something about it'. I just didn't take no notice. Then all of a

> sudden she said 'There's a Mrs. so and so coming one night of the week to see you'. I said 'What for?' She said 'well I've put your name down'. So after a while I said 'Oh well, that's up to you then. I shan't be here'. Anyway I was in the garden one day and this woman just come. She was a very nice lady what took me name and address and that. She said 'I'll let you know if anything happens like' and I said 'Don't bother' and I suppose it must have been a month after that ... she phoned the wife and said there's someone near me wouldn't mind teaching me ... So I didn't like the idea very much. Anyway the wife pushed me, see? So I said 'Oh, O.K. on the understanding that I just give it two or three weeks try ... then I'll just say yes or no". (1)

In this latter case it was a change in life circumstances (redundancy, then difficulty in obtaining another job, finally obtaining one much less congenial than the one held for twenty years prior to redundancy) that caused the wife to exert sush pressure on her unhappy husband.

In many cases the spouse had been dealing with all correspondence, (often quite happily), for the duration of the relationship:

> "Its terrible really. I can't write Christmas cards or nothing you know. I leave it to my wife all the time. Sort of leaving it to the wife if it suits the wife". (10)

or

> "Like when it comes to write for holidays, she did the necessary. she used to write like and even when it come to writing a cheque, you know, she wrote it on plain paper and I used to copy if from that". (5)

The wife may be glad to relinquish this role: as this husband's comments show:

> "I get the pleasure of writing out the bills now. I get the cheques now for the bills (laugh) to give me practice (laugh) I don't know whether its a good thing or a bad thing (laugh). But I suppose its taking a bit of responsbility from the wife". (13)

Sometimes it seems her feelings may be less positive. The wife of the following respondent has never made reference to the fact that her husband now handles correspondence without her assistance:

"The marvellous part about today is you can sit down and write it yourself. Well, you know the wife's never passed any comment, but I think she's quite chuffed at the idea that she hasn't got to do it". (5)

While the encouragement of the spouse was necessary, most respondents went to some lengths to keep their literacy deficiencies hidden from their children. In only one case was the son, a teenager, aware of his father's attendance at classes. At the other extreme one respondent refused to bring any books with him to class as he told his children he was going to the pub and carrying books would have 'aroused their suspicions'.

The age of the children is a very relevant factor, as they become literate the situation becomes more threatening to the respondent. This will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere, but the feelings of the majority can be summed up by one respondent's comments:

"Its more embarrassing at home with the children. They're pretty good now (at reading). My boy is anyhow. Yeah, I tend to keep away from my boy, anyhow in English". (12)

Of those students not married most had mentioned joining the literacy scheme to their parents, even though they no longer lived at home with their parents.

One student, divorced and bringing up his children alone had mentioned his attendance at the literacy scheme to no-one in his family, but in his case he had received considerable help and encouragement from a friend, who even went to the lengths of taking an evening class in a different subject, but in the same building as the literacy class, in order to accompany his friend each week.

It seems probable that the support and encouragement of a member of the family or close friend is important in ensuring the student does not give up too easily.

Were the respondents' parents aware they were having literacy difficulties at school? Did they try to help the respondent in any way?

Respondents were asked whether their parents were aware that they were having literacy difficulties at school and if so whether the parents had attempted to help their children in any way. About two-thirds of the sample said their parents did know and of those who were aware of the problem the majority tried to help the child with his literacy difficulties in some way. In two cases this involved obtaining private tuition for the child, although in neither case does this seem to have been satisfactory:

> "I got sent to a private tutor for two years and it didn't help me at all. She didn't give me anything to tax me". (8)

In another case the tutor decided to end tuition and told the grandmother who was paying for the lessons:

> "You're wasting your money ... even if this boy has got something in him he just refuses to learn". (3)

Sometimes the parents tried to help the child themselves:

> "Mother always tried to entice me to read more and spell, you know, instead of watching tele or going out. But when you've got no interest in a thing your mind just goes blank". (7)

This attempt at help could be resented:

> "When I was little they used to try and teach me. They didn't teach me properly so I just wasn't interested". (4a)

In one case the attitude of the parents, particularly the mother, has been positively harmful to the child:

> "My mum didn't have time. She didn't really help me. She used to take me to school and that was it really ... My father spent hours with me more or less every evening. I used to come back from school, have my dinner, then he used to spend an hour with me at least. My father was very good with me; he was very patient. I mean its difficult with your own father sitting there ... You start laughing or you start getting bad tempered or you start looking at the T.V. behind you. So we used to go up into another room or something. And the trouble with my dad he would be very patient then right at the end he'd start raising his voice and he used to get very upset. And that's when I used to say, 'Oh, damn all this' and put my pen down and walk out because I couldn't take anymore. Then mum would hear us having a row. You didn't mean to have a row. My dad just told me straight, he says 'try and pull yourself together' all that kind of thing. And I'd get downstairs and mum would say to me 'There you are I told you you can't do anything. You've always been that way really' ". (2).

The scene depicted here shows that when the situation is going to be so emotionally charged the child would have been better off receiving no attempts at help from his parents.

In the cases where the parents were said not to know the child had literacy difficulties the respondent sometimes stated that they attempted to hide their problem from their parents:

> "I found I kept it a secret, to save embarrassment you know". (13)

or

> "I just kept it to meself". (9)

or

> "They probably knew I couldn't spell very well. But I don't think I ever let on how much it worried me". (2a)

Although Charnley states that very few of his sample blamed their parents, in this sample the responses were more mixed. In this case about one third of the sample externalized some responsbility for their literacy inadequacies by blaming their parents.

"Neither my mother or father took any interest at all in school work ... I can never remember my father sitting down and reading to me. There was books around and he read and me mother and that but never, not once, personally did one of them ever sit down with me and went through a book with me. I've got no recollection of that whatever ... Whether the school ever told them I had problems with me reading or not I don't know. I certainly never told them". (13)

"Yeah, I blame them (parents)".

"Do you?"

"Yeah I do. I think they should have done more than what they did for me being backward at school". (12)

One respondent, brought up by his grandparents, partly blamed them for his difficulty at school. This seems a realistic appraisal since he did not attend full time school until he was ten years old:

"You know what grandparents are. Anything you want you get. So, it was my misfortune to come up in war time. So what happens? 'You don't have to go to school, you stay at home with us'. O-oh. What did I want to go to school for? So I never went."

After he had stayed away from school for a year the war came:

"Then we went away. I went away to the country with my gran. I never went to school, never knew what a school was, used to muck about on the farm. When I came home I went to school the first day then I come home dinnertime. I said I didn't want to go no more. Anyway I had some more time off. Anyway, my mother remarried so that meant we moved to another district. I was getting on then, ten. And that's when I started going to school properly, when I was ten". (1)

Some students exonerated their parents from blame, although the question in no way implied blame but asked only 'do you think your parents knew you had problems with reading at school?' Only one student fitted the popular stereotype of being from a large family:

"There was eight of us and they (parents) didn't have time to help". (10)

Another student excused his parents in terms of neighbourhood expectation:

> "I don't think, especially where I was bought up, parents worried about their children, especially at that age anyway you know. I don't think they worried too much until the children used to get to twelve or thirteen and they see the exam results and that sort of thing. Then they'd start taking notice, sort of thing". (4)

In only one case is it clear that the parents were illiterate themselves. The student describes bringing a form home from school that had to be filled in as she was a school leaver. A neighbour had to be called in to read and fill in the form since neither she nor her parents could cope with it. Prior to this, she notes:

> "When I used to come home and ask for help with reading and homework dad used to say 'Oh you don't want to bother with that'". (11)

Many parents, especially those who 'choose' not to notice their child's difficulty may be very weak in literacy skills. While no one obvious pattern emerges from this data it is clear that where these parents have attempted to help their children this has been markedly unsuccessful.

School background

About half the subjects recalled receiving some kind of help from their school. Sometimes this help seems to have been delayed until the last year of school, but some schools have gone to some lengths to help pupils from a much earlier age. Usually the impact on the respondent had been made by one particular teacher helping them. Several students refer to receiving specific help in the form of extra homework or tuition after school. One student received half an hour's extra tuition every day while in the class of a particular teacher at his primary school. Another student seems to have developed the art of finding emotional, if not educational, support:

> "Every year there'd be a teacher who'd always feel sorry for you. They would help you and protect you from the other teachers and protect you from the other children". (2)

As can be expected when dealing with people who have failed at school, some bitterness is expressed towards school. It was really only after the 1944 Butler Education Act that remedial classes began to be universally established. It must have taken some time after the war before the system was operating on a realistic scale. Many of those, though not all, with the worst memories of school are those who were at school prior to, or during, the war. Here are some of the more negative comments:

> "No, school didn't help me at all. You just used to get a swipe on the side of the head or something, see? I never had nobody help me at school, never". (10)

or

> "Nobody it seemed ever wanted to take an interest in people that are disadvantaged and try to help them with special classes. It was just a question of everyone had to be at the same level and if its too advanced for them then its just too bad". (6)

Overcrowding in the classroom was often mentioned by the respondents as a reason why they did not receive enough attention. Charnley also notes a frequent mention of this and he suggests that this may be one reason why the individual tuition offered by the literacy scheme appeals to many prospective literacy students.

> "They was understaffed and the reaction of the teachers was the ones who were bright would sit at the front and the ones who were backward was slung at the back and given menial jobs to do. You know, like taking round the milk, sweeping the school out, doing the garden, chopping wood or bringing the coal in. All this sort of thing you know. And this is how they occupied our time sort of thing, you know. Just to keep you out of the way, to keep you quiet. They didn't give you no extra tutoring or nothing". (4).

The pervasive effect on education if one suffers problems with literacy is mentioned frequently . One student sums up thus:

> "That was the end of my education really, because geography you couldn't read your book and maths you couldn't read the sums, so it ruined everything really". (4a)

The extent to which this is experienced depends on whether the student was illiterate or semi-literate. Studies (Charnley, 1978, Gorman, 1980) to date suggest that the most common pattern in those who have so far come forward for literacy tuition is that they are semi-literate and often present with spelling problems. However, this can still be the cause of considerable distress as is summarized by this student:

> "I remember one teacher, I was in her class and we used to have a spelling bee before assembly every day. I didn't get on with her and she didn't get on with me. It was everyday, 'How many have you got right? If not stand up and tell the class the ones you got wrong'. I've never got over that. I always have the feeling, Oh, Miss ----- is going to make me stand on a chair and tell them all the spellings I got wrong. I'm still fighting that one I'm afraid." (2a)

It was noticeable that those subjects who had received help from the school were the younger ones who attended school after the war. Charnley notes "More recently the remedial services have made even greater efforts to raise standards". (p. 54).

Respondents perceptions of their children's education.

Students, referring to the situation for their own children held different opinions. One student's daughter had experienced reading difficulties and was put in a remedial class for a year where she received intensive reading tuition and was then able to return to her previous class. Another respondent talked of the spelling lists his child brought home every week to learn.

> "Nobody ever concentrated on you, know what I mean? They'd give you a thick ear that was about all. But nowadays they send a list of spellings home and say your daughter's got to do these by tomorrow, sort of thing". (10)

One student felt the situation had not improved since he was at school:

> "My son's told us there's quite a few in his class when he left school who couldn't read or spell, even today. And some of the boys look the nicest, you would look at them and think they was one of the brainiest blokes going. Yet when it boils down to it they know nothing ... and yet today the school s still don't seem to do nothing for you at all. In fact if you can't read at school today you're worse off now because all you learn from - well my son did - is books". (1)

School attendance

In his study Charnley notes that adult literacy is considered by many to be a problem of non-attendance at school 'for one reason or another'. The extreme example in this study, of the student who did not attend school until he was ten years old, is an exception. Some student's schooling was disrupted by the war and there is one case of schooling being disrupted by illness. However, most of the sample attended school regularly and attended only one primary and one secondary school. There is very little mention of truanting. Where it does occur it is on an occasional basis, not as a regular activity. What is clear is while at school the respondents felt they learnt very little. Charnley notes "the form of remedial treatment, whilst no doubt successful with some children had little effect on our student sample. If anything the further efforts of the secondary school merely confirmed the sense of failure in this respect". (p. 60).

If the hypothesis of this research is correct it is not surprising that concentration only on the cognitive aspects of the learning situation should produce this result in some cases.

When did the respondents first become aware of their literacy difficulties?

Charnley states of his sample:

> "Without exception every student left school as soon as legally possible, well aware of his/her inability to read, write or spell correctly" (p. 49)

and that furthermore

> "the problem of their reading and writing performance usually appears in their earliest school days". (p. 51)

If earliest school days can be taken to mean sometime during primary school, the same can be said of these subjects with two exceptions. One respondent notes:

> "I think the first time it hit me was when I went up for a medical for the forces because then you had to fill in forms. You know school and all this and that's when it really, you know, first got home to me. Up to then, you know I can't say it was ever really embarrassing to me". (5)

Another student states that he wasn't especially aware of having difficulties at school but "just got by" and spent his time "having a crafty fag" and "keeping out of trouble". (5a). This attitude is interesting in the light of Ryle and MacDonald's research (discussed elsewhere) as it suggests that because this person identified with his peer group rather than identifying with adults, any difficulties with the school lessons were not perceived as very important.

The majority of respondents became aware of their difficulties during their time at junior school. One, with hearing difficulties, became aware of problems in the infants school. Mostly the ages nine to eleven are mentioned. When asking respondents to focus on their first awareness of literacy difficulties students are likely to remember an emotionally charged moment, as is illustrated in the example above when the respondent experienced difficulty with filling in a form. Sometimes the student [illegible] with others:

"People the same age group as me had no problems at all and some people could read very good indeed and I was bad". (4a)

or

"I was one of those who from an early age didn't seem to make any progress. I seemed to be the odd one out". (4)

or

"All the rest (of the class) are all bigheads and are always putting their hands up and, you know, bragging what they can do. And it used to put me off a lot with my reading and writing and then I used to know I'd got a problem - not like them. Why am I like it? I used to wonder to myself. I used to go home at night and say 'Oh my god I wish I could take my brain and get his brain and put it in my brain'. It sounds confusing, but see what I mean?" (2)

The frustration of not being able to write down one's thoughts is a recurring theme:

"Soon as I picked up a pen that was it. I knew all the answers but I couldn't write them down". (10)

or

"I couldn't put down in words what I wanted to say. It held me back". (12)

Memories of School

Accompanying their memories of first becoming aware of difficulties were other vivid memories of difficulty at school:

"It was a thorn in me side when they used to stick things up on the board. Even in primary school I'd try and write it all down and they'd be wiping it off and leaving the bottom bit for me. Because everybody could read the word and then write it down, but I had to take it letter by letter and put it down. And, er, I used to get real butterflies in me stomach and I used to get all tensed up and just, er, lose heart with it really". (4a)

or

"Regards reading, on a Friday you had to catch up on what you do in the week - what you hadn't read. We used to have a series called Ring-a-Rosies Books. I'm talking about the early forties. I can remember those hateful books were thrust at us and I couldn't read any of the words. And you weren't allowed to go out to play or do anything, you know, until you'd done your so many pages". (2a)

These early difficulties could affect later schooling. About a third of the sample had only negative memories of school:

"It was horrible. Terrible. You don't know what a dread it is really you know. It's sort of like living in fear. You say to yourself 'what lessons have we got today?' you know if its English you'd be sitting there in fear like." (10)

or:

"It became a nightmare to me actually. Really my schooling was a nightmare. Although I tried I just couldn't do it. So it was just a nightmare, it really was". (3a)

or:

"In the secondary school they just put us in a little group, you know, 'get over there you stupid children'. You didn't get much attention. We used to be in the class, but if you didn't keep up ... It was all right if they were saying things you know. But if you had to put it down on paper or from the board ... no-one knows what its like really. You can't explain it to anybody really". (11)

Sometimes the feeling of failure led students to seek more positive experience in other areas of school life:

"I was a keen sportsman really, er, football and all that you know. Basically it was my main interest. I suppose even if you're succeeding in such things as sports you can be accepted". (5)

Being good at sports may confer other advantages as one student notes:

"I used to do boxing. I was fighting in the school team .... I think I done boxing you know, because I couldn't spell. See, because if they used to take the mickey I'd hit 'em hard. And they stopped taking the mickey, see?" (10)

Not all the respondents found their experience of school totally negative. Many had mixed feelings:

> "I liked most things ... the general atmosphere of school ... but I didn't enjoy English because I couldn't get the hang of it". (7)

or:

> "I enjoyed it except when they put up boards of writing, there was a little bit of aggravation with that". (4a)

or:

> "I enjoyed going to school, because at school I knew nothing different than school". (6)

Charnley expresses the opinion that when a respondent says they hated school, they were "referring not simply to the school, the teachers and their curriculum. Rather they were describing the deeper relations of youth, the relations with their peers at school, their parents' view of school and their school progress and their perception of themselves as failures". (p. 56). A child's view of school may contain all the elements he mentions but the picture was not viewed as totally negative by the majority of subjects in this study, as the above remarks show.

<u>Did the other members of the respondents' faimily have difficulties with reading, writing or spelling?</u>

It is often observed that deprivation operates in a cyclical fashion; this seems at least partly true of illiteracy. About two-thirds of the subjects said that some other member of their family had experienced difficulties with literacy. However, it did not follow that those students who were parents were content to see the pattern continue as the following remarks show:

"(Because I'd had trouble) this is why I made sure my son could read before he went to school. Because I made this a point, I said to my wife 'no way do I want him to be like me'. And he's not, thank goodness. But that's only because we pushed him at the beginning". (1)

or:

"My kids have got so many pens they don't know what to do with them. We had nothing like that, same as we never had any books ... When they first went (to school) I used to always buy them books every week, reading books. The wife used to say 'What do you buy them for?' and I said 'Because I never had none so I want to make sure they have them'. Because I believe this as a fact you know. The more books they get and that and pens and that, the quicker they get on"(10)

Even though some parents were determined that their children did not suffer their disabilities, later aspects of education, such as attending parent-teacher evenings, were left to the spouse where possible:

"I used to go (to the school) when they was in the juniors because I could cope. But now they're in the senior school,um, you know. If you go to the teacher and ask about geography ... Well, I know there's different countries, but really if you go up to the teacher you've got to know something about something or other haven't you? If you go and ask about your child. You wouldn't go and make your self look a fool would you? That's the way I look at it". (11)

As mentioned earlier only one student was aware that both her parents were illiterate. Sometimes, however, there seems to have been a conspiracy of silence within the family:

"Perhaps my brothers are the same as me, but I wouldn't, er, tackle them on the subject". (3a)

or:

"I don't think I'm badder than my brothers. They keep it to their-selves. I don't know how to explain it. Like I say even between brothers and sisters they keep it to theirselves". (5a)

or:

> "I never said anything to my brothers in case they might take the mickey". (10)

However, some students seem to have taken on an alloted lifescript by identifying their literacy difficulties with their families:

> "I must have taken after all the women because the women on my mother's side have all been behind with reading and spelling from a young age". (2a)

or:

> "This problem runs in her (mother's) family. Most of the brothers and sisters in her family were the same. I don't think its anything to do with the environment they were brought up in. I don't think it was anything to do with that. It was just, er, a genetic effect and unfortunately it has been passed on to me". (4)

> "My sister's perfect. Oh, she'll write a whole foolscap page. Stuff like that you know. She followed mum and I followed dad - he's never been a very good speller, so she followed mum and I followed dad. I try but it just don't seem to get there". (7).

The pervasive nature of this view means that the prognosis for improvement is not good. More hopeful is this student's attitude towards his mother's difficulty:

> "My mum has (problems). She has difficulties with her handwriting and she does have spelling problems. I mean even I can spell words that she can't spell". (2)

or:

> I know my father didn't have any problems because he used to write to me and he had a steady hand. Everything was virtually measured out if you know what I mean. If you go along a complete line it was like a row of soldiers standing upright. Well, my father was like that, even in his garden everything had to be in a dead straight line you know. I believe, well I know I'm right, my mother obviously had some difficulty. She could read, oh yes! Name, address, everything.

> Certain things she was a bloody sight better than I was. But she was a long way from good. She used to write like if you had a birthday. She used to write out her own birthday cards to you. But, you know, I think a lot of this was what we done this year we do next year, type of thing". (5).

About one third of the sample stated that as far as they knew no other member of the family had experienced literacy difficulties:

> "My sister was very good - school captain. She was very good at English. My parents could spell all right. It's just me". (12)

or:

> "My brother's got O level English so he's all right". (1a)

or:

> "My dad's good and when I say good I mean good. Mums O.K. too". (13)

Those who stated that other members of the family had not experienced literacy difficulties tended to be those who stressed their spelling weakness, rather than general literacy problems.

Where both parents experience literacy difficulties children are obviously more likely to experience the same problem. Only one respondent came from such a background in this case. Most of the two-thirds who came from backgrounds with literacy difficulties had one parent sharing their difficulties.

What decided the student to come forward for help?

There is no doubt that the programmes on the BBC and the publicity given to the campaign on such programmes as 'Nationwide' prior to the commencement of the programmes had a great impact on the general public. This atmosphere of acceptance may have made it easier for people to come

forward for help and many students mention seeing television as the decisive factor in their seeking assistance:

> "I saw the advert. on tele and it was just a on the spot decision. That was it. I just picked up the phone and rung. I don't know why. Couldn't tell you why. I'd seen the advert before and it didn't do anything for me. But this particular time I just picked up the phone and rung". (13)

> "I'd wanted to do something about it for a long time you know. But I just didn't know what to do until I saw this programme, and, um, then I thought I'd really find out about it". (6)

> "I found it a bit awkward reading and spelling and filling in forms. I saw the programme on tele and decided to come". (8)

> "Obviously its always been on my mind. But I do believe that the first thing that ever gave me the push was the fact I saw it on TV. It gave you a telephone number to ring from the privacy of your own home so there was no embarrassment". (5)

> "It had always been on my conscience, then I saw it on TV". (9)

These students were all recruited at a time when the programmes were being shown at popular viewing times. It is the writer's impression that the situation is now altered and the atmosphere of the public has largely returned to its previous indifference.

Provision in literacy had been growing for some time prior to the publicity, and despite cuts the existing provision is still greater than it was prior to initial funding of the scheme. However, it remains inadequate.

The atmosphere of general acceptance which surrounded the literacy campaign probably helped those who were motivated by many reasons to actually do something about obtaining help:

"I'd been thinking about it for a few years - just didn't have the courage. I just happened to see one of the advertising papers the local authority put out and I thought it was a good opportunity to have a go".

this decision was strengthened by family pressure:

"My girl said she wanted to come on a typing course at the same school on the same night. That really made me mind up". (4)

A change of job can sometimes be a motivating factor:

"I got this job where I had to write people's names and addresses, so I decided to improve". (8)

More often people with literacy difficulties will not change their job if they feel uncertain of their ability to cope in new situations, but wanting to change jobs can be a motivating factor:

"I felt I was losing out at work". (9)

"I wanted another job and I got fed up going places when you couldn't fill in the forms like. Well, you could fill 'em in but you was so nervous all the time about writing, you know". (3)

"Its going for jobs which you can't get because of the lack of reading, writing and spelling. Its every time you go for a job there's a test and once you find there's a test, sort of, you think 'here we go again' sort of thing. It's like hitting your head against a brick wall and not getting nowhere". (5a)

One student was motivated by redundancy. The situation is clearly described by the student:

"The main reason is when I got made redundant. I mean I was there twenty years so there was no point in me, sort of, wanting to read and spell because you get in a routine and because if you work in a factory nine to five that's it, you know. There was no need for me to spell. It was as simple as that. Then when you want another job you've got to fill in forms and everything and you start realizing what you should have done years ago". (1)

One student was encouraged by his teacher at school to enrol at evening classes:

> "There was a nice lady, Mrs. ... she told me to go (to evening classes) because at school I couldn't concentrate because the kids kept messing me about. So she thought my best bet was to go when I left school. So she found out about classes and sent me up there". (2)

Whatever the motivation for this action it seems to be fairly unusual for the secondary school to suggest the scheme. Where schemes have been linked to work-places and have tried to help those who have just left school with literacy problems (e.g. Bournville Project) they have met with little success since the students were not seeking help but rather having it thrust upon them. Most of those who attend classes have been at work for some years and met the practical difficulties of managing without literacy competency. School leavers with a history of failure usually want to put any learning situation which resembles school, firmly behind them.

> "At school, you know, I was pretty bad, but I accepted it, I just didn't read and write. I couldn't do it. But, like society forced me to do it. I felt embarrassed at work". (4a)

If the adult with literacy difficulties has found an undemanding job, in which he feels secure, it is sometimes family pressure which motivates him, perhaps when his children become literate:

> "The main reason is children you know and they start growing up and they come of an age when they ask me a question and I won't be able to answer it". (5a)

> "The children started asking me spellings. You couldn't do it yourself so you'd say 'ask mum, I haven't time'. You know. Something like that - any excuse would do". (10)

One student focusses on what was probably 'the straw that broke the camel's back'.

> "... It happened that when I went to buy something on hire purchase I had to fill in a form and I had to ask the address and spelling of places for reference and I had to turn round to a friend who was with me and ask him to spell the names with the assistant standing there and I got rather embarrassed and then said 'I'll have to do something about it'". (7)

What did the students imagine the classes would be like? Why did they choose group or individual tuition?

For people who have failed in school it must take some courage to enter a learning situation which resembles school. It was felt that it would be useful to ask the students what they imagined the classes would be like as this may give some insight into what encouraged and discouraged them about coming forward for tuition.

One of the advantages of the literacy scheme is the flexibility that is possible, offering tuition in either the tutor's or student's home, or in a group at an adult education institute.

The majority of students in this study contacted the literacy scheme by telephone and were then interviewed. Their skills were assessed and if very basic they were offered individual tuition, otherwise they were given the option of attending a group.

Students transfer from individual to group tuition for a number of reasons - either because they have progressed in literacy skills and the tutor feels they need professional teaching, or because one or other party is dissatisfied with the one to one arrangement. Also a change in circumstances may cause a tutor to cease offering his/her services. In this study two students were dissatisfied with individual tuition and asked to be transferred to a group:

"That (individual tuition) didn't work out. He talked too much and we didn't get much done". (3a)

or:

"When you're with a person for two hours you get, well, a little bit fed up when you're working for two hours at a time and there's just the two of you in the room. When there's just two of you one of you's got to be talking all the time. And it's very hard if she asks you to spell a word and you haven't got no idea what it is. You feel ... well in my way of thinking you feel such a bloody idiot. And you're looking at her and you start to tremble and everythink. But in a class you don't get that so much. You get it wrong, O.K. But the others don't really know if you got it wrong or not ... But you don't feel so much of an idiot ... The point is you don't get so uptight so much. But when you are with a tutor and she's sitting next to you and she asks you to read something and perhaps you only know three words out of twelve, I tell you you feel like dropping in a flipping hole - well I do". (1)

Some students who opted for group tuition in preference to individual tuition expressed similar feelings to these:

"I thought being taught in a group it wouldn't be so concentrated on me all the time". (1a)

"Basically I'm quite shy and I thought if there was a crowd I wouldn't stand out so much as if it was one person you know. You can blend in the background and you don't feel such a fool really". (2a)

It would be interesting to know how many students drop out from individual tuition for the above reason, but don't have the courage to ask for a transfer to a group.

In one case the tutor had requested the transfer: the student describes the situation:

"So many people volunteer you know. These volunteers come up and they think it's going to be easy. They think - they've most likely all got the same idea - a couple of months and the person will be able to read and write, sort of thing. She thought it was going to

be easy but I think she found it wasn't. It was work for her to find work for the person involved. It is hard work, they've got to find something completely new for me because I get fed up and they get fed up doing the same thing". (5a)

While the main fear of individual tuition is too much attention, the main fear about group tuition is the ability to cope with the level of work that is given:

"What worried me before I went to classes I didn't know what grade I would be starting you know. I was frightened of being slung in at the deep end, sort of thing, and being embarrassed about it". (4)

"Why I didn't want to go (to classes) I thought people would be a lot better than me and you're sort of sitting there like an idiot if you like". (4a)

"I reckon a lot more people would come if they knew what it was like. But I'm sure there's lots more like me who are just frightened and think 'well I'm not going because I can't spell a three letter word so I'm not going when other people can'". (1)

The television series 'On the Move' helped to alleviate these fears in some people's minds when they showed a film of a group receiving literacy tuition:

"They did show some of them on T.V. and I thought if they was that bad I'm laughing". (10)

It can be surmised that these fears are shared by many. The estimated numbers of those with literacy difficulties shows that only a tiny fraction have come forward for help and most of these are not totally illiterate. Perhaps those with the most severe disability rarely find the courage to come forward; new approaches are needed to reach these people.

Another fear shared by many students was meeting some-one they knew. Here it is essential that enrolment for classes is sensitively handled. Sometimes

arrangements are made for the students to enrol at the class itself, which works well. But having to queue on enrolment night demands special courage:

> "On the night you're supposed to come I didn't want to stand in the queue and be recognised. I realize everybody's coming to learn something but I think there's a stigma attached. For instance the first time you come there's a blackboard with an arrow saying basic education over there. It puts you off you know". (3a)

While many people had worries, one seemed to have very unrealistic expectations:

> "I thought it was 'oh, it's just a sort of a six or twelve week course, you know. A crash course. And then it seemed to go on". (7)

Some students imagined going to a class would be like going back to school:

> "Well, I imagined it was going to be just like school". (2)
>
> "(I thought it would be) frightening. I think back to when I was at school and I think how that was frightening. (13)

One of these people was among the three who were only offered group tuition:

> "I thought 'I will try this class' and ... I went about six times before I went into the class. I went there once and he came out and said 'Can I help you?' and I said 'I'm looking for the class' And the teacher come out and spoke to me, but I just couldn't go in still, I said 'I'll come back next week' sort of thing because I was still frightened there was going to be somebody there I knew. That's the reason I didn't go to ------ school because its so close to home, so I picked a school what's a bit further away". (5a)

It seems likely that the student is partially rationalizing his fears by focussing on a dread of meeting someone he may know, although it is undoubtedly a part of his fear. This step - a 'public admission' of being

a person needing literacy help can perhaps be compared with the trauma of 'coming out' for a homosexual. When a person has kept an aspect of their self hidden, revealing it is seen as a painful and dangerously threatening step to take.

When the step has been taken there is a great relief in being able to share:

> "Once I felt very nervous, very shy about it really. But once you come you realize you're not the only one and it does make you feel better, you know". (1a)

> "Didn't discuss it. Never discussed it with anybody in me life. So it was all of a sudden finding yourself talking to people and realizing there was other people the same as me - had trouble". (13)

Did the respondents' ideas of tuition change with experience?

When asked whether their ideas about classes or tutors had changed with experience most mentioned positive factors and this relief about sharing their problem instead of keeping it hidden seemed to dominate:

> "Well, it seems somehow it's getting easier than it was before. Once the ice is broken you can talk openly with one another, you've got no inhibitions against one another. You know one another and you know what you're striving for". (7)

> "It's not having to hide things any more". (2a)

Most respondents expressed relief that the situation had turned out so differently to their school experience:

> "It was a more friendly atmosphere than I imagined. There wasn't a teacher just standing over you". (2)

> "You don't feel so embarrassed (as you did at school) when you can't do it". (9)

"The whole relationship is much different. I mean you tend to base your ideas on how you were when you were at school and it's not like that any more. It's a much better atmosphere and you're not made to feel you're inferior if you can't spell". (1a)

"The tutor helps you more than I expected in the way they get you to join in and, er, bring forth your own ideas. The part that really does help me is because you make mistakes but you don't get worried or upset over them so much because it's not brought up in front of everybody". (2a)

"You don't feel so bad as lots of others are making mistakes as well". (11)

Perhaps because the respondents have mostly negative memories of school their expectations are so low that they are almost bound to find the situation less negative than they imagined. Their negative memories also focus on an unsatisfactory child to adult relationship which they have come to associate with at least some aspects of the learning situation. They may, therefore, be pleasantly surprised to find themselves in an adult to adult relationship.

What did the respondents expect to get out of joining the literacy scheme?

All the students hoped to improve their literacy skills. It was interesting to note that when the question probe 'Did you expect to improve your reading and writing' was asked, two students said:

"Not expect, no. I hoped, but I didn't expect". (4)

Some respondents mentioned only the skills factor as their expectation on joining:

"There was only one thing I wanted to get out of it and that was to learn to spell. I didn't want to be no genius speller - just to get by, you know". (10)

"Just the ability to spell. That was my, you know, that was the one thing. Really, you know I didn't have any big dreams. But just to be able to spell when you're confronted with a form to fill in, just fill it in without panic. That's the main thing". (13)

"Only the satisfaction that I would be much more further educated in reading, writing and spelling". (6)

The fact that some respondents stress just spelling does not necessarily mean that their other literacy skills are not also weak. This student expresses this clearly:

"I just wanted to spell. I mean I didn't want to spell long words. I just wanted to be able to spell so that if I went anywhere and anyone said anything to me I could just write it down and look at it afterwards and be able to know what I put down". (4a).

What he actually needs is help with reading, writing and spelling.

Some students mentioned confidence as well as skills improvement as part of their expectation: often this confidence was considered an important factor in future improvements:

"Well I think really it's confidence. I don't know if you can understand how that is. But if you can't spell very well you're not very confident. I mean you go after a job and they thrust forms at you. You know, you're worried you're going to have something you're not going to be able to spell". (2a)

"Well, I think to spell you've got to have confidence". (11)

One student had been embarrassed at having to turn down a job she had been offered as a social secretary on a committee and this was uppermost in her mind:

"Well, what I really wanted was to be able to correspond with people. I would like to get up to the stage where I could take a social secretary's job, or something like that. Because I am in a guild and people think because you don't take your share in the secretarial work, you know, working on committees and that, they think you're not bothered really. I would love to, but my written work's just not up to it". (1a)

One student spoke in more general terms about his expectations:

> "A better education and a better social life". (2)

Only one student specifically mentioned that he wanted to get a better job, but this could be said to be implicit in much of what is said about being able to cope better with forms. Also, when only skills are mentioned it could be implied that the student expects to feel more confident. However, it is important to note that many chose to focus only on the skills. This does not seem to have been the case in Charnley's study.

<u>When the students joined how long did they think it would take them to reach their goal? Did their ideas about this change over time?</u>

Charnley found that most of his sample expected that it would take a long time to reach their goal,

> "Most students realized that progress was slow and that it would take a long time to reach the standard they wanted". (p. 95, 1978).

In this study the students perceptions varied from

> "Oh, ages" (11)

to the student who was expecting a 6 or 12 week crash course.

About one third thought that it would take a long time to reach their goal:

> "Oh years, definitely years. Because of the time factor in teaching. You spent years at school and they never taught you. And you know it's only a matter of an hour or so a week, so it's got to be years, you know. If they couldn't teach you at school and I was at school 14 years (sic, means until age 14) I can't expect anybody to do it in under that time really you know. It's up to me, er, out of school to try and learn something". (4)

"I didn't expect it overnight I'm quite happy to plod along, sort of thing". (3)

Two students stated they had no idea how long it would take:

"Oh, I don't know - as long as it took because I was very slow at school with reading and writing and that". (1a)

"No idea, no idea at all". (9)

About a third mentioned times which varied from between two and five years. Just under half the students stated that their ideas of how long it would take hadn't changed with time:

"it'sjust plodding on. I've got used to coming anyway. The problem is starting something". (12)

Of the remainder some said it was taking longer than anticipated:

"I thought at first it would take me about three years. But I've been that, including the other class. What I started off on was very basic stuff you know ... I hope by the time I'm 27, I've given myself until I'm 27 and I'm 20 now. So that's seven years time. Well, I hope to be like everybody else". (2)

"It seems like it's taking me longer to learn than what I imagined it would take". (4a)

"I find I'm not advanced as I'd hoped to be over the period I've been studying". (6)

Some said they now realized they would never reach their goal:

"I never, I don't expect to reach me goal at all because I'm not that quick at learning. In fact I know it now, I know it takes longer than ever. I know I shall never be able to spell how I would like to spell. Don't matter, without I took it up full time I'll never be able to do it". (1)

"Tell the truth I never think I will. No, you know I've not set meself nothing. I don't want no GEC (sic) or O levels or nothing like that. I just want to be able to spell when I come to do something you know. I'm not worried about being a famous speller or going on quiz games or nothing". (10)

"I don't foresee my actual goal there. Because I'm tiring now and er, I don't do enough at home. But I'm a lot better than I was". (7)

Two students realized that their goal had changed as they improved:

"Well, I think I would like to go on and try for O level in English". (13)

"I think now I'm striving for more, to get a bit further". (1a)

One student saw the successful conclusion of his tuition in sight:

"I think to be 100% sure of myself another couple of years. Because now I keep going over things myself. This may not always be necessary you know. But it's something that's taken over and I believe if you want to do it you've really got to stay with it". (5)

Some students may have begun their studies with a goal of perfection, in spelling for example, which is not attained by most literate members of society. Also, it is easy for students to denigrate their achievements.

The organization of classes mean that, at most, about two hours tuition is received each week. If the student adopts a passive role, thinking that mere attendance at the class is enough to improve skills, then progress will be very slow. A student whose job and general life situation give him no opportunity or motivation to practise newly acquired skills will forget much of what he has learnt from one week to the next.

Did students intend to go on to further classes?

About half the subjects stated that they would like to go on to further classes. The most frequently mentioned hope was to be able to go on to O levels. If this seems an unrealistic goal it should be remembered that the O level may be a focal point which, as one student stated "is the ultimate in education". It is the highest point to which they can subscribe. Also it is an external, public recognition of a certain skill. This is summed up by one student:

> "O level. I don't know if I'd ever get there, but I would like to. Well, I'd like to go on and see if I could get an O level English. I think to prove it to myself that I'm there you know. It would be for me inner self mainly, where I'd think 'now I've done it' (laugh) Yeah, I should get great satisfaction out of that". (13)

Two students stated that they were not sure whether they would go on to further classes, it would:

> "Depend on time and circumstances I suppose". (1a)

or:

> "It depends on what my job would entail. If I go on to a job where it needs extra classes I would go. Otherwise I wouldn't". (4a)

Some of the reasons why students did not wish to go on to further classes relate to reasons why they would leave classes e.g. lack of time or family pressure.

When did the respondent feel they would be ready to leave?

Tutors and students do not always share similar perceptions about when the student is ready to cease tuition. Charnley refers to tutors expressing disappointment that the student has ceased tuition, while remarks from the

student indicate that they are ready to leave and not dissatisfied. Sometimes students have limited specific expectations and the tutor hopes to widen the student's horizon. For example, in a case known to the writer, a student arrived at evening class announcing she wanted to learn to write her name and address, happy birthday and happy Christmas and "the names of the girls I work with so I can write on their cards proper when they have a whip round at birthdays and that". Having acquired this information and learnt it the student announced after a few weeks that she would now cease tuition. The tutor tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade the student to stay and learn to read and write some more. The student declined, she did not see the need to learn anything else. The tutor felt the exercise had been a failure; the student had not received an 'education'. However, if the student feels satisfied that he/she has reached his/her required level, notions of what the tutor wishes the student to achieve may not be relevant in considering the student's success. It is important, however, that the student feels that 'the door is left open' so that if they want to return to tuition at a later date it is easy for them to do so.

Most students in the sample related their readiness to leave to acquiring a sense of confidence in situations they were likely to encounter:

> "I think when I can relax when there's anything to be done like writing something out - or a job where I can fill in a form without worrying or taking bits of paper to copy from". (3)

> "When I can write fluently without thinking. That's when I should feel confident". (2a)

> "When I'm as good as everybody else"
> "Who do you mean by everybody else?"
> "The people I work with I suppose". (4a)

> "Now I realize you can never stop learning. I think I will come next year. I'll leave when it comes to the point that I think 'Well I'm on the main road now'. The rest I can pick up myself". (3a)

> "When I can spell satisfactorily, be able to write a reasonable letter, make small reports. I think once I've achieved that the rest will be able to follow by itself". (6)

If the person did not have a job in mind they referred to their reading skill as a measure of their success. No reference was made to books however. They related it to the daily task they set themselves - trying to read the newspaper:

> "When I can go through the paper without no problems". (9)

> "When I can read the newspaper from beginning to end and spell all the words in it". (11)

Sometimes the student's remark seems to be negative:

> "I've thought about this, tell you the truth and I don't think I'll ever be ready to leave ... I suppose there might come a time when you might get fed up". (10)

But he goes on to note:

> "It wouldn't worry me. I think now, with what I've been taught I could learn meself enough you know, the rest of it". (10)

This respondent follows a similar pattern:

> "I don't think I will be fully ready. If I was I could sit down and write a fooscap page - not of something absolutely silly - but with hard words in like circumstantial. If I could write down a word like then I'd know I was confident. But I'll never be that confident because I have trouble with silly words. But I'll struggle along all right". (7)

These students seem to be beginning to acquire some confidence, perhaps because they are redefining their expectations.

Another student sums up her feelings and expectations thus:

> "I'll be ready to leave at the end of the year. I've got to the point where I feel there are some people who can spell and some people who can't spell. Perhaps I needed to come here to realize that. I think there are some people who are just never going to be very good spellers you know. You can get by". (2a)

Two students appear to have shifted any responsibility for their learning away from themselves and on to the tutor's shoulders, so that the only perception they hold of completing their tuition is when they are told, by the tutor, to leave:

> "I think it's the tutor really will turn round and say to me 'I think you've improved a lot and I don't think you need to come any more". (2)

> "I won't (leave) until somebody tells me, I'll just keep coming". (8)

It could be said that these responsents will not be ready to leave until they feel ready to make the decision themselves.

One student stated that he would never be ready to leave:

> "I shall never be able to leave the class if I want to do how I want to spell. I shall never be able to spell the words. I've been coming to classes three years and there's still three and four letter words that I can't even spell now. It's going to be another twenty odd years - well, I won't even be able to spell. If someone said 'Right take a letter' I could never be able to take that letter down. It's just as simple as that and that's not saying nothing about the teacher. I'm a slow learner and that's all there is to it". (1)

Other students are expecting pressures outside the learning situation to direct their decision about leaving tuition:

"I think once you become interested in English you can go on indefinitely. I think it would be circumstances I would have to leave for".
"What sort of circumstances are you thinking of?"
"Well, just the journey, travel and my job and perhaps not having the time to carry on to do the homework you know". (1a)

"Well if I get involved in a thing I like to hang on to it. I don't think my wife would be surprised if I stayed another five years. I think there'll be things telling me to finish".
"Such as?"
"If it interfered with my marriage". (5)

From remarks elsewhere in the interview it seems that in the latter case the wife felt threatened by the change in the relationship which occurred when the husband's literacy skills improved so that he no longer needed her constant assistance.

One student felt that he was ready to leave tuition:

"Personally I can manage, I can get by now. I can't get by easily for clerical work, but for the type of work I do I can get by with what I know now, so probably I'll finish the end of the year". (12)

As can be seen the majority of students perceived the end of the tuition in terms of skills attainment which they felt would raise their confidence. Others named factors not directly relating to confidence.

Were respondents able to study at home?

An important factor in how students progress is how much time outside the classroom, they are able to devote to their studies.

About half the students said they couldn't study at home. It would be too easy to dismiss all their reasons as mere excuses:

"No, it's the hours I work. 5½ day week and I got three children and the wife ain't home at nights so I have to get them all to bed. And time I come home I'm tired anyway, you know. When you first come home the children are up. Time they go to bed its late and you just don't want to go and sit down at ten o'clock at night and start studying". (12)

"No up to a little while ago I was doing a lot of hours. When I got home I was just tired. The wife sort of, 'we won't eat 'til you come home and we'll eat with the children'. You know they come home at four o'clock and they're having tea at seven. And time you've washed up and got the children to bed you find its nine o'clock, know what I mean? Then I feel I've had it, turn the tele on and - whompff - (imitates falling asleep). I'm off you know. Then the wife goes to evening classes and I don't sort of do nothing that night. Then there's shopping night. There just don't seem enough time. I have tried and I've found you know, my eyes are closing up. So I've said to myself 'Well you aren't learning anything you're too tired' you know. I've always promised myself I'll do it. But when it comes to it I don't and I should do". (10)

"Very difficult because my two eldest girls, they're doing exams and study and lots of revising. And we're overcrowded at home. I've got a writing bureau in me bedroom and, er, it's more or less commandeered every night by the girls. Well from six o'clock there'll be one of them there. The youngest is fourteen and she's doing lots of homework as well. One wants to watch a particular programme that's on the T.V. downstairs. One'll want to play a record in their bedroom. And, of course, it only leaves my bedroom for the study like. So naturally I have to take pot luck when I can". (4)

"Finding time is the thing. I come home too tired, not a great interest. Time I've done the dinner and cleaned up and sat down it's eight o'clock and I don't feel like starting to take books out then". (7)

"Yes, I am able to study but I find, unfortunately, I don't study as much as I shouldbecause of the distractions of ordinary household chores and TV is the biggest distraction of all. One finds after work you're tired and you know to wrack the brain after a full day's work is a bit too much". (6)

Many of the students had jobs which were physically demanding yet boring (e.g. factory worker, waiter); the tiredness they complain of should not necessary be seen as an empty excuse. The students who did study tended to be motivated by the positive encouragement to do so which they received from their family:

"I try to study at least something every night because the wife - she's much better than I am, put it like that. She says 'You do one night and miss one night and you're not going to do it'. See? I do try and stick to an hour each night when I'm on day work". (3a)

"My wife gives all the help she can". (1)

"The wife helps me with studying at home ... she's around all the time if I need help. Some things we do together you know, go through it together and I find that helps". (13)

Some other students were able to study because they had home conditions conducive to study.

"Yes, I'm very fortunate there - being shift work and no children. So two or three times a week I've got the place to myself type of thing. I do 6, 7 or 8 hours a week. On the night shift I do 5 or 6. Afternoon shift not so much as you're up at 4.30 and its a bit tiring like. But I take the books and go through them a few minutes everyday. I might look at a book half a dozen times in the course of a shift". (5)

Some students aim to use their new reading skill everyday:

" Oh, I pick up a newspaper everyday now. Even if it was only just a little chapter I try and read every day, you know, in the evening". (11)

"I always read the papers every day, the evening and the morning one". (6)

Another student is not yet competent enough to manage alone:

"I try and read bits out of the newspaper. Some of the words ' can't read so I'm stuck then". (4a)

Being given specific homework may be a help:

"Well, I have to do my homework. I just shut myself off in a room on my own you know". (1a)

"Well, I do about two nights a week. One day I do my homework in rough, next day I do it neat". (2a)

Some homework seems a positive advantage, as in order to progress students need to spend some time reinforcing work covered during the lesson. Most students do not seem able, for many reasons, to do this independently. But if they are given a specific task that they can cope with all will usually attempt it on a regular basis.

Were there ways the students felt different since starting tuition?

Charnley, in his interviews asked the respondents the question 'Do you feel easier in yourself and do you think this ease within yourself is as important as the skill of reading and writing?' This study did not wish to phrase questions in a direct way as this may influence the respondents' replies. Instead, students were asked 'Since starting classes are there ways you feel different, for example, at home, at work or with your mates?' As was the case in Charnley's study most respondents stated that they felt more confident.

> "I'm more confident and calm at home, definitely". (11)

> "I think it's made me relaxed. That's all I can say". (2a)

> "I feel a little more confident in myself. I don't shrivel up now". (3)

Some respondents referred to their increased skill as well as confidence:

> "I feel as if I can take part in things. I don't know how to explain it. I don't have to ask my husband to do everything for me. I can sort of plod on. I have a try to do it myself more now. That's the main thing - you haven't got to ask you know. Before if it was my friend's birthday then he would do her card, sort of thing. I have a try at it myself now so it's a lot better". (11)

"Yeah, mainly the confidence you know. That's the main thing I think, you know. Because if you can start to spell and someone comes up with a piece of paper in their hand and says 'Look at this' you can stand and read it and not make out you can read it which I did in the past". (13)

"It makes a lot of difference at work because it give me the opportunity to be union shop steward". (3)

"I feel more confident at work you know, taking down telephone messages and people's names and things like that". (8)

"Now when I'm at work with two or three others and we'll sit down I'm not frightened to sort of say 'oh such and such'. And I feel a lot better now. You know before it was - I used to be too busy, but now I sort of join in". (12)

"It's this confidence thing all over again. Well now I can write and my writings a lot neater. Before it was up and down and pressing hard. But now it's nice and neat and small. And spelling you do as you go along! It's amazing I think". (4a)

Some students were reassured that they could learn:

"It's made me feel reassured about my own capabilities. I know I've got a long way to go yet to be good. But I know I can always better myself". (3)

Others felt their improvement had broadened their horizons:

"It's made me far more interested in - well, given me a sort of broader outlook, I think. Really I expect I don't watch television very much I listen to the radio and lots and lots of things I've heard are a lot more meaningful to me because I understand quite a few more of the words and their meanings". (1a)

One student has gained confidence not just by improving his skill but redefining his perceptions of the level of skill possessed by others. This is an important step in learning, as students quite often have unrealistically high expectations for themselves, based on unrealistic perceptions of others:

"Yeah, confidencewise. Yeah, more confident now. It don't bother me now, spelling you know. If I can't spell it don't bother me where it used to. If someone asks a question I just say I can't spell it, you know because that happens to everybody. It's surprising how bad most people are when you really look into it you know. When you can't spell you tend to think everybody else can. But when you can you find loads of them are wrong. So it don't really bother me". (12)

or:

"It gives me more confidence in myself knowing I'm not at a disadvantage to most people". (6)

A small minority of respondents stated they they felt no difference since starting tuition:

"I still feel wary of reading and writing. I feel I've improved but not that much that I feel confident yet". (5a)

One student said that he felt worse since starting tuition. The possible reason why some students may feel worse will be discussed in the chapter dealing with attribution theory. Although restricted to one student in this study, Charnley also mentions that a minority of his sample noted that they felt worse since tuition commenced. The reasons given in his study are, an over friendly tutor/student relationship, which is misinterpreted by the student, extraneous circumstances such as a jealous spouse, over expectation on the part of the tutor (p. 98). In this study it is the student's expectations and perception of self which affect the situation.

"I feel worse really. I never realized there was so many different spellings and different ways you could spell the same word. It's put me back really because I thought once you could spell a word one way that was it. I could spell ... I just didn't know. I thought when you could spell one word that was that. You could use that word a hundred times any way you wanted ... I find it very hard. So really it's made me worse. And this is why I get in a rut because

it's opened my eyes to what I never knew existed. It's just like being indoors for a year and all of a sudden going outside and you see hundreds of people. Well, you say they're not people they're words ... You think 'oh bly'. Quite often now I think 'well I know I shall never be able to spell them all' that's all there is to it". (1)

Did the respondents think there had been an improvement in their reading, writing and spelling?

All the respondents, including those who said they felt no different, or worse, since starting tuition, perceived an improvement in their literacy skills. The majority mentioned specific skills as their measure of this improvement:

"Oh yes, definitely. I couldn't read at all before. But now I can, you know. I'm not saying I know all the words but if I'm reading something I can get the basic idea of the story". (11)

"Definitely. There's no doubt about it. I was very poor before I come to these lessons. I had trouble filling in my time sheet at work. Today it's a much harder level that I get stuck at". (12)

"Yes, definitely. I find I've improved because there's lots of things I've learned that I never knew before I came. Things like you change the y to ie. One of the reasons I suppose I could never read properly was because I didn't understand a lot of hidden, well, just a lot of little things I never knew about which made things much more difficult to understand. And now that I've learned so many things like that I find I've improved much more". (6)

"Oh yes. I can write a letter much better. I can actually get down what I mean and express really proper thoughts that I want to get across to people. Whereas before I couldn't, express the proper opinion and also I never felt confident because I didn't really know how to write properly, you know, to punctuate sentences, or you know, the grammar of English I can never remember anyone explaining it to me before". (1a)

"Yeah, a definite improvement. It's understandable where it was just a confusion before". (4a)

"Yes. I write it down. I know it's right rather than have to look it up just to confirm it to myself". (8)

"It's helped me a lot looking after my private affairs, in transactions with banks and writing letters to businesses". (6)

"Only this morning the chargehand writ a ticket out for a job. It was 'repair hydrolic junkshun'. He said 'How's that?' and I said 'You spelt junction wrong'. He accepted the fact what I said. He just rubbed it out snd put what I said". (5)

Two students, while acknowledging there had been an improvement in their skills noted:

"Oh, yes, a marked improvement, but not the marked improvement I would like to have done. I'd have thought in a few weeks or a few months I would be up to a fair standard which hasn't fully materialized. Completely due to myself because I haven't sat down and spent hours learning like I should". (7)

"Oh yes, of course there has, but it's not the rate I expected. I expected that once I could spell fifty or a hundred words they would automatically fall into place. They don't learn to spell at school it just comes natural to them. They just pick up the words theirselves. They don't say 'Right there's six words you've got to learn to spell' it's just part of everyday life. To me it's like walking. Once you can walk you're away like a shot, no looking back. Well, I thought it was going to be like that with spelling". (1)

As well as being affected by factors to be discussed in relation to attribution theory, both these students could be said to hold unrealistic expectations which they have failed to modify over time. In the latter case the student's perceptions of what learning involves have not helped him. He seems to see his role as a passive one while things 'automatically fall into place'. In the first case the notion of a crash course was based on seeing advertisements for foreign language courses and is an inappropriate comparison of quite different learning situations.

Did the respondents think this improvement had changed their life in any way?

Asked whether they thought the improvement in their literacy skills had changed their life in any way most respondents referred to incidents involving skills or confidence - remarks very similar to those evoked

by the question 'are there ways you feel different since starting tuition?'

> "With my husband I feel ... I don't have to rely on him, you know. What's the word? Independent. I feel more independent and that's the thing you know, really. That's what I want so I don't have to ask anybody, so I can do it all myself". (11)

> "Well, I've joined a club where at one time I wouldn't have dreamed of joining anything. Well I just wouldn't have gone in case I had to do anything, so I just wouldn't go". (2a)

> "Yes. I'd never go to parties in case I was asked to do anything, you know, quiz games or something like that". (1a)

> "The confidence is gushing out of me. For me to be sitting here talking about reading and spelling. Well 3 year, 2½ years ago I wouldn't even have sat here with a tape recorder or talked out it at all. No way ... I think there's probably lots of things that I would have done, you know the different clubs that I would have joined. You see I do go now. I know if they give me a form to fill in I can fill it in quite easily. But before like, give you a form and you would shy away like, all the time". (13)

Several respondents referred to their freedom from needing to hide their weakness:

> "It makes you more relaxed to know you're not hiding it no more. Like I've done in the past. I've sort of kept myself in a corner all the time and thought I won't do that because I can't do it, you know". (3a)

> "It certainly helps you to talk about it, whereas before you tried to hide it you know". (12)

> "It's nice when people you know, know you can't spell. Er, people very close to you and they help you out, see? Before you didn't discuss it. They sometimes might think 'Oh he can't spell very well' but you didn't talk about it. But when you do talk about it and then they know how bad you are and they're with you or against you and I'm lucky because I've got people who are with me". (7)

Only a few referred to changes in their working life which were directly related to this improvement:

> "It's made a difference at work, you know, when I'm going to write something there where I wouldn't have before. Even if I look it up, you know, I know how to look it up and I sort of carry a dictionary round with me". (10)

> "It's changed my life in the respect that I couldn't do the job I'm doing at the moment unless I did improve, so I wouldn't be in my present job. And if I can't spell a word it don't bother me, I look it up in a dictionary and I don't mind if somebody sees me looking it up because,I mean,my job's not an English teacher,therefore, I'm not expected to be one hundred percent. And you find if you look in the desks of the factory foremen they've all got dictionaries and they all look words up so it's no problem". (12)

This student's situation is undoubtedly eased by his increased confidence and his relaxed and realistic attitude towards literacy skills, as well as by the improvement of these skills.

Another student who changed his job was in a different position. He had been in a job which he hated for twenty eight years, and after two years attendance at classes he felt confident enough to apply for another job and face filling in the necessary forms:

> "I wouldn't worry now if I had to go and fill in a form for a job. I'd never be able to come out with a word there. I'd know how to spell it before I went. I wouldn't worry so much. And I think that's why I stayed in that job so bleeding long. If I'd been a bit more brainy I'd have gone in five minutes not twenty eight years". (10)

As can be seen,his confidence is limited in that he feels he would need to know the necessary words before attending an interview. His life has changed, however, not just because he has a different job after all those years, but because he now feels he would not have to put up passively with an unsatisfactory situation.

Several respondents said it had made no difference to their life and one student said he now felt worse because he was now aware of how much he didn't know:

"No, it's made me worse really because I get so frustrated when I can't spell a word". (1)

Did coming to classes made a difference to what students did in their spare time?

Some students mentioned that their spare time now involved less watching of television:

"Say the only difference it's made really is I don't watch so much tele". (9)

"In a way it's stopped me watching so much T.V. I used to be a T.V. addict - watch the box all the time". (2)

"Well my spare time is taken up with spelling. This is my spare time now. I mean I used to sit and watch T.V. that sort of stuff - particularly when I was by myself. Now I sit and work". (5)

Some students mention that they read more, but what they are usually referring to is an increase in their skill rather than any great change in their reading habits. For example,most students had always taken a newspaper, even if they did not make a very thorough job of reading it:

"I used to read a newspaper, it was read a word, miss a word, just sort of scraping through sort of thing. Now every word is important". (6)

"I read the paper. Before I just browsed, you know. Now I read it more, sort of thing". (5a)

One respondent changed the newspaper he read (from the Sun to the Mail) and one now bought a quality Sunday newspaper:

"Now I buy the Sunday Times and on Sunday afternoons I sit and read it from cover to cover". (8)

With two exceptions none of the students ever read novels. Any books read tended to be concerned with their hobbies:

"Well I garden so I read more gardening books and that. I've got three or four gardening books at home. If I want to know something I pick them up and sort of look at them ". (1a)

Since coming to classes had what respondents wanted to do with their life changed in any way?

Very few students felt their ambition for the future had changed in any way; here is one exception:

"Well originally I never wanted to get promotion anywhere ... Now I'm quite content ... I took a job not meaning to stay - now I've been promoted, I've got a clean job, security - it pays me to stay on this type of job. It's been good to me". (12)

Those who had changed their job since starting classes had already achieved one ambition, but this did not necessarily change their view of their future:

"Well I got another job didn't I? I think I feel happier. I feel happier, yeah". (10)

Some students described their unchanged pipe dream:

"No, I'm very ambitious, that's the trouble with me ... I'd like to run me own shop - to be me own boss I should say, sort of thing, that's me dream. It's only because I can't do it I wanna do it. Once you've done it you wanna do another thing, see? This is the thing with me ... It's like someone climbing a mountain. Once he's climbed one mountain he wants to climb another". (5a)

Several other students also mentioned owning a shop or working for themselves as their continuing hope for the future. Some students responded to this question by mentioning opportunities that they had missed in the past, due to their lack of literacy skills:

"I've lost a lot of opportunities, especially when I was younger, not being able to spell properly and I'm luckier than most people I've had another chance. When I was twenty I was going to join the fire brigade and I failed in English. That was one job that today I

might be doing. I'm not saying I would have been better off as a fireman but I actually went and I failed, so it can change your life. I used to sell cars once. I couldn't write down the customer's particulars. I might have been a salesman. I think I could of left school and got a better job than I did if I got a better education". (12)

"There's nothing you can do a lot with,you know,if you haven't got the basics of an education. I definitely wouldn't be in the trade I'm in now if I had a decent education. I definitely wouldn't be in the position I'm in now anyway. I've had opportunities offered to me in the past. I was offered a managerial position abroad which I couldn't take".

"Can you tell me a bit more about this opportunity - it would have involved reading and writing would it?"

"Yeah, well it must have done, being the manager. It was in my trade. A person that had emigrated over there (Australia) and established hisself as one of the managers of this place wrote that I was offered the managership of this particular department. Of course I had to decline it."

"You didn't think to yourself I'll go and find a way round it?"

"I couldn't take a chance on the embarrassment, you know. It would have cropped up. See I had the practical knowledge of the job, but the academic - I couldn't really do the writing. I could organize it, how the processes had to be handled and everything and I could teach my particular job that I was doing. I could have taken it from the word go,but because of the writing it just couldn't work". (4)

These lost opportunities had not been revived in the latter case.

One particularly articulate student summed up his own, and many other people's future:

"Nowadays I think we're all looking round for a safe, safer, job occupation. I mean I work in a factory - sort of semi-skilled. They've just made 500 redundant from where I work. I'm still employed, but I don't feel safe. The amount to read nowadays if you're intelligent with the silicone chip here they can automate anything. So what I can do a machine can do. Then I'll be out and no-one will be worrying about me. I think perhaps it's made me look round a bit. The main thing is the services. You've got to look round and see what you think a machine won't be able to do and think 'Oh, I'll get into that job and try it'. And if you've got to write an essay - well that's what I'm here for - to learn as much as I can". (3a)

In a shrinking job market those without skills are in a much worse position than before. Some writers hypothesize that with the recession more people will come forward for tuition. However, it may be that many unemployed people without skills will sink into a 'slough of despair' and may not feel able to come forward for help. The cuts that have been made in literacy provision are likely to obscure the picture further, making comparison with the situation in the middle seventies difficult.

The perceptions of self emerging from the interviews show that all students perceived an improvement in their literacy skills and many exhibit increased feelings of confidence. It would be easy to include these feelings of confidence under one label and to assume, as Charnley does, that this overall expression of increase in confidence is the single most important factor to emerge. However, by applying a further technique - the repertory grid - a more complex pattern can be shown to exist.

CHAPTER FOUR E.P.I., Levenson's IPC Scale and Self Report Questions

The administration, elicitation and results of the hypotheses relevant to Eysenck's Personality Inventory, which was administered in the first and second phase of the study, are discussed in this chapter.

It traces the links between Eysenck's P.I. and Levenson's I.P.C. Scale and explains how and why this was applied during the second phase of the study.

The administration of the self report questions, which replaced the interview for the second phase of the study, and are juxtaposed with Levenson's I.P.C. Scale for some hypotheses in the second phase of the study, are also discussed.

Eysenck's Personality Inventory

Eysenck's work is too well known and readily available to need full documentation here. Briefly, his P.I. sets out to measure what he sees as "The major dimensions of personality, neuroticism and extraversion" (p.5, 1960). It was a development of the Maudsley Personality Inventory (Eysenck 1959) improving on this and rewording items "so as to make them understandable even by subjects of low intelligence and/or education" (p.5 op. cit). A lie scale was added to eliminate desirability response set. Eysenck assumes the neuroticism factor is closely related to 'the inherited degree of lability of the autonomic nervous system' and that of extraversion to "the degree of excitation and inhibition prevalent in the central nervous system". (p.81, 1964). (A full description of Eysenck's neuroticism and extraversion dimensions can be found in The Structure of Human Personality, 1960).

Findings which link neuroticism with academic achievement have suggested that neuroticism can be a motivating factor. (Lynne et al 1961). However, later studies (Joubert 1978, Morelli and Morelli 1979) which show a correlation between neuroticism and locus of control suggest that the relationship may operate in the opposite direction, since those who feel that they are not in control of reinforcement contingencies are likely to feel a sense of helplessness and this has been implicated in under-achievement (Seligman 1975).

A study relating neuroticism to locus of control was conducted with 67 college students (Morelli, Krotinger and Moore 1979). (This study was mentioned in an earlier chapter. Further details are given here). The measures used were Eysenck's P.I. and Levenson's IPC Scale. The researchers hypothesized that those who see themselves not in control of reinforcement contingencies would score more highly on neuroticism as measured by Eysenck's PI than others. They note "It would be expected that the EPI would be related to internal control, powerful others and chance factors of Levenson's scale as well". (p. 153, 1979).

A relationship was confirmed for neuroticism and internality (inverse) and chance (direct). But, as was noted in an earlier chapter, the writers make no further reference to the relationship with powerful others, and this seems a weakness in their study.

They conclude "subjects predisposed to neurotic breakdown are more likely to believe they are not in control of reinforcement contingencies and, furthermore, that consequences are determined by chance. The question as to why these particular expectancies develop for subjects high in neuroticism remain to be investigated". (op.cit.).

While no reason was given for the link established between locus of control orientations and Eysenck's PI the researcher felt it would be useful to include Eysenck's PI in her study as this well established personality measure could increase knowledge of adults with literacy difficulties.

It was decided that for the first phase of the study Eysenck's PI would be administered. If a high neuroticism score was confirmed then, during the second phase of the study, Levenson's IPC Scale would be introduced to eludicate locus of control orientations.

The first phase of the study also sought to establish a link between perceptions of self elicited on the repertory grid and attributions for literacy failure given in the interviews. It was anticipated that if the hypothesis linking these two methodologies (I,D) was confirmed, then during the second phase of study further innovative work could be initiated by the framing of hypotheses directly linking Eysenck's PI, Levenson's IPC Scale, self report questions and the repertory grid.

Hypotheses in the first phase of the study relevant to Eysenck's P.I.

The hypotheses for the first phase of the study which related to Eysenck's PI were as follows:

1B) The researcher's sample will score more highly on neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, than the normal population established by Eysenck.

1C) The degree of neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, will correlate positively with the distance between the present self and the ideal self elicited by the repertory grid, those scoring highest on neuroticism being furthest away from their ideal self.

1D) Those respondents who gave continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid are likely to be those who, in the interview, perceived the cause for their past literacy failure to have an internal locus of control orientation. (Internal and external locus of control being defined by Abramson et al's 1978 model). (Although this final hypothesis does not relate directly to Eysenck's PI it is included here because it was anticipated that confirmation of this hypothesis would allow the development, in the second phase of the study, of hypotheses directly linking Eysenck's PI and other methodologies).

Sample for the first phase of the study.

The EPI was administered to the respondents in two groups, five in each group. Age range 20 - 55 years. All the sample were male.

Administration of the EPI for the first phase of the study.

The venue was the classroom where tuition took place. Each person was given Form A of Eysenck's Inventory and asked to tick the appropriate box (yes or no) while each question was read out loud by the researcher. Administration was prior to evening classes in July 1980.

No problems or difficulties were encountered.

(Details of the administration of the repertory grid are given in the appropriate chapter).

Result

Both hypotheses 1B and 1C were confirmed at the 5% level. (For full details see the statistics chapter).

Table showing the extraversion and neuroticism score, as measured by Eysenck's Personality Inventory and the % matching score (called K) between 'AS I AM NOW' and 'AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE' on the repertory grid, for respondents in the first phase of the study.

Grid No.	E.	N.	K.
4	9	22	41
3	6	20	21
1	4	14	43
10	13	14	50
9	11	12	56
2	13	12	65
6	15	11	84
5	11	10	56
7	15	8	85
8	7	7	70

For hypothesis 1D, because of the small numbers involved, from an initial sample size of ten, it was not possible to find a suitable test to test this hypothesis with the first sample.

It was, therefore, not possible during the second phase directly to link Eysenck's PI,[1] Levenson's IPC Scale, self report questions and the repertory grid, as had been anticipated.

Hypothesis 1^{D} became hypothesis 2E part 2. If this hypothesis was confirmed with a much larger sample it was hoped that the link with the repertory grid and locus of control orientations could suggest the grid maybe a useful additional tool in locus of control studies.

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(1) It should be noted that while this study has used the EPI since it sn extensively used standardized test, linked in some studies with Attribution Theory, this does not imply that this thesis argues for Eysenck's underlying theoretical position. However, it is considered beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into detailed discussion of Eysenck's work. (For such an approach see Vernon, P. 'Personality Assessment. A Critical Survey'. Methuen 1972).

The other hypothesis framed for the second phase of the study sought ways of elucidating locus of control orientations in respondents. Further methodologies introduced at this stage of the study included Levenson's IPC Scale and self report questions.

Before considering the hypotheses for the second phase of the study these additional methodologies will be considered in more detail.

Development of Levenson's Scale

Levenson's scale arose from a questioning of the validity of including under external control, as Rotter did, such different types of external orientation as 'belief in the basic unordered and random nature of the world and belief in the basic order and predictability of the world, coupled with the expectancy that powerful others are in control'. (p. 15, 1981, Levenson). She notes that in the latter case such a person may believe that since the control exercised by powerful others contains regularity of action 'he or she may obtain reinforcements through purposeful action' (p. 15, op.cit). She notes that this view of externality is quite similar to Rotter's notion of internality.

As the IPC scale developed as a reconceptualization of Rotter's IE scale it contains items adapted from his scale, as well as specifically written statements. It contains three eight item sub scales with a 7 point Likert format (0-6) presented to the subject as a unified scale of 24 items. Internality (I) measures the extent to which people believe they have control over their own lives. (e.g. "When I make plans I am almost certain to make them work").

The powerful others dimension (P) measures the extent to which powerful others are seen to control life (e.g. "In order to have my plans work I

make sure they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me'. The chance dimension (C) reveals the person's perceptions of chance as a factor in life. e.g. 'It's not wise for me to plan too far ahead because things may turn out to be a matter of good or bad luck.

Scoring

The scales are scored separately. ie. A low I score means that the person does not see himself as having control in his life. It cannot be inferred from this that he, therefore, necessarily believes in chance and powerful others. These separate scores have to be consulted to ascertain what attitude prevails.

Levenson notes, "for most samples, scores on the internal scale are consistently higher than those on the P or C scales. Such a finding is expected for two reasons - (a) for most Western societies belief in personal control is given a cultural perception. (b) A certain degree of personal means/ends connection is necessary for survival and coping in the world". (p. 21, 22, op.cit).

Levenson notes a tendency among tested groups to see powerful others as thwarting attempts at mastery and control. (Although, interestingly, some groups e.g. Conservative activists and chronic pain sufferers see powerful others as benevolent). She suggests further research to ascertain conditions under which these are viewed positively and negatively. In this study the consensus attitude is assumed.

Levenson also suggests further clarification is needed to differentiate between feelings of mastery and perceptions of cultural values on the internality scale.

As has already been noted,in this field unvalidated measures designed for a particular study abound and cause problems of validity. Levenson's measure is well validated and arose from a theoretical not an empirical base. It is the most suitable measure available to date.

As already noted, scoring is by circling the appropriate number (from -3 to +3). The scales are scored separately. i.e. a low internality score does not necessarily mean there will be a high powerful others or chance score. The scores must be considered individually.

Because, during the course of calculating the results of the hypothesis it became necessary to compare the scores on Levenson's IPC Scale with other variables (the repertory grid and self report questions) a way of expressing which of the modes (I, P or C) on Levenson was dominant had to be found.

The raw scores which Levenson provides give no clue as to whether internality, powerful others or chance is the dominant mode. For example, subject 52 has an I score of 38, but a P score of 40 and a C score of 33. However, subject 4 has an I score of 15 but a P score of 6 and a C score of 2.

In order to alleviate this problem the researcher developed a measure (called R) which was based on the algebraic difference between the I score and the higher of the other two (P or C). To make the measure positive 20 was added. Thus, subject 52's measure becomes 18 (38-40+20) and subject 4's measure becomes 29 (15-6+20). **The figure 20 was chosen as this was the minimum number needed to produce the measure positive.**
This statistic could be used in future investigations of locus of control which include Levenson's IPC Scale as a measure and which wish to correlate an index of the inter-relationship between the scores and some other variable.

Administration

The scale was administered in conjunction with the other items presented to

the respondents (repertory grid, Eysenck's PI and self report questions). In every case the grid was presented first, Eysenck's PI second, Levenson's IPC third and finally, the self report questions.

The items on the scale were read out to the group,who were then asked to circle the number they felt most closely matched their feeling about what was being read out.

The numbering was explained in the following manner. "If you strongly disagree then circle -3 and if you strongly agree circle +3. If you feel 'well that's not really true', put -2. 'Yes, that's true' means +2 and 'Well, I'm not sure'is -1, 'Well, could be is +1'.

These scores were reiterated as each question was read.

Respondents' comments

Some of the researcher's sample commented on the American English. For example 'I feel like what happens' instead of 'I feel as if what happens' and 'pretty much' in place of 'more or less'. Of the 24 items, 3 dealt with car accidents and many students commented on this. Also,the format- statements using the first person singular - although, no doubt a deliberate ploy by Levenson to ensure the questions were applied personally rather than generally, caused some comment, it seemed, because of unfamiliarity.

Although students made more adverse comments about this than the other data collection methods in the study they did not experience comprehension difficulties, although the scoring (-3 to +3) had to be carefully explained and was reiterated after each question.

Self Report Questions

In the second phase of the study it was not practical to conduct interviews with such a large sample. Instead, the information required was collected by self report questions.

Self report questions have been used in previous research examining attributions for academic failure (e.g. see Butkowsky and Willows, 1979, described in detail in chapter 1).

Not all the questions referred to attributions for failure.

The questions asked by this researcher, given in order, were as follows:

1. How long have you been coming to classes?
2. What do you think the reasons were that you had difficulties with reading/writing/spelling?
3. Do you think there has been an improvement in your reading/writing/spelling?

These questions had been asked as part of the interview schedule in the initial research. The wording was not changed in any way as it was chosen with great care for the original study and no problems concerning clarity of meaning were encountered during the interview phase.

The reasons these questions were chosen is largely self explanatory. The first question was posed in order to eliminate students who had not attended classes for a minimum of one academic year.

The second question sought the attribution for past literacy failure. The word reasons was deliberately plural, allowing the respondent to feel free to list as many of these as he considered relevant. No direction was given as to possible reasons to allow the minimum of direction from the

researcher. Occasionally a respondent would ask for clarification 'What sort of reasons do you mean?' in which case the probe from the initial interview schedule was used (see appendix).

Although the information required by the third question is obvious the following will reiterate why this and no formal tests were applied. The difficulties which arose in a previous study (Charnley, 1978, when an attempt was made to apply formal reading age tests to adults with literacy difficulties has already been noted in an earlier chapter. A decision was made by this researcher not to attempt to collect data in this way. Instead, students were asked for their own perceptions of their literacy. (Apart from the difficulties of using RA tests, whether or not the respondent perceived an improvement in his literacy skills was more relevant to this study).

Analysis

Question 1.

A table was constructed showing the length of attendance. Students attended a two hour class once a week. The data was deliberately collected towards the end of the academic year to include as many students as possible. In fact, only one student needed to be eliminated from the study as he had begun classes only a few weeks previously.

Question 2

Definitions of Abramson and Seligman's attributes are given fully in the interview chapter. The students' replies were written out and then categorized by the researcher into:

External - wholly blaming outside factors such as school.
Mixed - blaming the self and external factors

Internal unstable - blaming the self, although not in such a way that this would be perceived across situations e.g. 'I hated English so I never tried in that lesson'.

Internal stable - blaming the self in a way that may be perceived across situations e.g. 'I'm a slow learner'.

The responses were given to a panel of 3 judges for categorizing. These categories were then compared with those given by the researcher. Where discrepancies arose these were discussed with the judges and a final result agreed unanimously.[1] (The judges were teachers, 1 female, 2 male).

Question 3

This question necessitated either a negative or a positive response. (In fact all respondents replied in the affirmative).

Administration

The questions for this study were kept to a minimum and presented as the final task. The researcher read out the questions one at a time. Respondents were asked to write their replies to these questions on the sheet of paper provided. It was stressed that spelling was unimportant and if they wanted to use a particular word but were not sure about spelling to just guess. They were also told that if they felt they really couldn't write anything down to think about the answers and as the researcher came to collect up their papers she would write out what they said. (This only happened on two occasions).

Hypotheses from the second phase of the study relevant to the methodologies discussed in this chapter.

Hypothesis 2B The sample will score more highly on neuroticism, as measured by the EPI than the normal population established by Eysenck.

(1) The Thurstone Interjudge Reliability Measure was considered suitable for this purpose. It was used by Charnley in his study and worked well. This factor and pragmatic considerations such as time and availability encouraged its use in this thesis.

Hypothesis 2C The degree of neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, will correlate positively with the distance between the present self and the ideal self, as elicited by the repertory grids, those scoring highest on neuroticism being furthest away from their ideal self.

Hypothesis 2D, part 1. There is a relationship between closeness to the ideal self, as measured by the repertory grid, and the attribution for literacy failure given on the self report questions. Those closest to their ideal self being more likely to externalize the reasons for their literacy failure.

Hypothesis 2D, part 2. Those closest to their ideal self, as reported on the repertory grid, are more likely to be those who see themselves as having more control over their life than either chance or powerful others on Levenson's IPC Scale.

Hypothesis 2E, part 1. Those who internalize their reasons for literacy failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who see chance and/or powerful others as having control in their life, as measured by Levenson's IPC Scale.

Hypothesis 2E, part 2. Those who internalize the reasons for literacy failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who show no change towards the positive pole on one or more constructs (where positive means more desirable to the respondent) between the elements 'as I am now' and 'as I used to be'. They will have continuing negative perceptions of self.

Two of these hypotheses (2B and 2C) which refer to Eysenck's PI will be discussed here.

The other hypotheses are considered in more detail in the repertory grid and statistics chapters.

Sample for the second phase of the study.

From a total of 58, 49 respondents were selected for inclusion. (Full details are given in the repertory grid chapter).
Age range 17 - 58 years. 32 male and 17 female respondents.

Administration

Each student was presented with a package containing (in order) the repertory grid, Eysenck's PI, Levenson's IPC Scale and a blank sheet of paper on which to write the answers to the self report questions. Fuller details of the administration of relevant methodologies has been given earlier in this chapter, except for the repertory grid which will be covered in the next chapter. Administration for the EPI was identical to that conducted with the first sample.

Results

Hypotheses 2B and 2C were confirmed at the 5% level of significance.

Although it was confirmed that the sample scored more highly on neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, than the sample of normals established by Eysenck it is not clear whether this score is a result of, or a factor in, non-achievement.

The confirmation of a link between a high neuroticism score and the distance between the present self and the ideal self on the repertory grid (those with the highest neuroticism score being furthest away from the ideal self) is an interesting finding which could be investigated further in future research.

Fuller details of the results are given in the statistics chapter. A discussion of the implications of the results is contained in the final chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE Repertory Grid Chapter

There are two separate sections to this chapter, covering the first and second phase of the study. Both discuss the design, administration, elicitation and results of the hypotheses relevant to the repertory grid aspects of the study.

These two sections are prefaced by a brief introduction to the repertory grid. There is no attempt in this study to explicate Kelly's theoretical position; only aspects directly relevant to this thesis are considered. Readers interested in a comprehensive review and an explication of the role of the grid in education should refer to Pope and Keen (1981).

Summary of rationale for using Kelly Repertory Grids in this Study.

The Repertory Grid Technique is based on Personal Construct Theory which sees man as

> "an inveterate inquirer, self-invented and shaped, sometimes wonderfully and sometimes disasterously, by the nature of his inquiries". (Kelly 1968, p. 42).

The grid is seen as useful in producing alternative factors to those which emerged from the interviews as well as reducing researcher bias. The grid technique can be used to enable a person to become aware of and examine his own conceptual system. Some work has been carried out using this technique with school children who are backward readers, (Ryle and MacDonald 1977), but to the researcher's knowledge the technique has not been previously used with adults with literacy difficulties.

Personal Construct Theory has as its fundamental postulate "a person's processes are psychologically channellized by the way in which he anticipates events" (Kelly, 1955). It focu ses on the person, and as

Bannister and Fransella note "modern psychology is not in the main, about persons, and so by making the person the central subject of the matter of psychology, Construct Theory changes the boundaries and the content of the science". (Bannister and Fransella, p. 43, 1971). They go on to outline five ways in which one considers oneself a person. These are:

> "1. You entertain a notion of your own separateness from others, you rely on the privacy of your own consciousness.
>
> 2. You have a notion of the integrity and completeness of your own experience so that you believe all parts of it are relatable because you are the experience.
>
> 3. You have a notion of your own continuity over time. You possess your own biography and live in relation to it.
>
> 4. You hold a notion of the causality of your actions; you have purposes; you intend; you accept a partial responsibility for the effects of what you do.
>
> 5. You have a notion of other persons by analogy with yourself, you assume a comparability of subjective experience".

While noting that many psychologists can and do try to look upon other persons as moving objects, explicable in mechanical terms it is argued from a construct theory point of view that "we will understand, explain and predict more about people ... if we centre our thinking on the idea of a person". (p. 45).

In seeking to start with the individual and look outwards from there, the repertory grid technique was developed by Kelly as a way of observing the "Bi-polar constructs" through which each of us observe our universe. The technique, as originally conceived, involves a list of approximately twenty cards on which are written the names of people important in the person's life, such as parents, siblings, friends, employers, enemies, husband or wife, and so on. These form the elements. These are then selected in threes and the person is asked to name a way in which two of

the people are similar, and contrast with the third. Suppose the three cards were your boss, your mother and your father. It may seem to you that your mother and your boss always seemed to know the answers to questions, whereas your father hesitated or told you to find out the answer for yourself. (Kelly 1955, p. 223). You may choose to define this as decisiveness and its opposite as hesitancy. This '<u>construct</u>' is then applied to the other people (elements) you have named.

Instead of using people as elements you could list important events in your life, such as your wedding, your first serious quarrel with your parents and so on.

The elements, whether events or people, are listed along the top of a matrix and the constructs are filled in down the side. The entries in the matrix are single digit binary numbers; usually a rating scale of one to five, or one to seven is used. When completed the matrix can be factor analyzed to find to what extent the person is using a variety of constructs or only a few constructs masquerading under different names. The columns can be examined to see which figures, or events, in the person's life are viewed similarly.

Kelly designed the grid for clinical use with his psychotherapy clients. Others have used it to show, for example, how a stutterer, suicide or smoker views his world (Fransella 1970, Landfield 1971, Mair 1970). Its usefulness can be illustrated by a brief consideration of a study of smokers' attitudes towards smoking. (Mair 1970). This study showed that many smokers view smoking as a desirable and masculine activity, while others thought that seeing a person smoking conveyed the impression that the smoker was confident. Because the grids revealed these attitudes it

became clear that it is not realistic to expect people to give up something they view so positively; first the respondents' perceptions of smoking need to be changed.

The grid has been used in the area of interpersonal relationships to show the attitudes of military men to relationships, the attitude of men to women, lecturers to students, students to subjects, etc. It has a wide area of applicability and has the great advantage that it portrays the world viewed through the bi-polar constructs which Kelly hypothesized we all use to give meaning to events. What the grid gives us is a picture of the individual's world as they actually view it, not the world as we (the researchers) think they see it.

Development of the Grid

Since Kelly originated the repertory grid, other forms of the grid have been developed, but all contain certain common characteristics. These characteristics have been summarized by Bannister and Fransella (1971).

1. All are concerned with eliciting the relationships for a person between a set of constructs, either in terms of construing elements, as in the Repertory Test or the Rank Order form, or by directly comparing construct with construct as in Hinkles' Imp Grid (1965).

2. The central aim is to reveal the construct patterning for a person and not to relate this patterning to some established normative data. There is no reason why data shouldn't be collected for some specific purpose such as in the Grid Test of Thought Disorder, (Bannister and Fransella 1966).

3. "There is no fixed form or content". It is a technique not a test and the selection of form and content is related to each particular problem.

4. "all forms are designed so that statistical tests of significance can be applied to the set of comparisons each individual has made. A basic assumption underlying the method is that the psychological relationships between any two constructs for a given person are reflected in the statistical association between them when they are used as judgmental categories". (p. 70, 71, 1971).

Considerable thought was given to the form of grid that would be most suitable for use with adults with literacy difficulties. Ravenette's work in the field, as he sought to find ways of applying Personal Construct Theory to his work with children, was examined. In an unpublished manuscript (The Situation Grid: A Further Development on Grid Techniques with Children) he suggests that Kelly's technique, where the client supplies both elements and constructs "is too complex for children and may also be too complex for less intelligent adults - especially if they are working class". While it is in no way suggested that the adult semi-literates in the sample were of low intelligence, the fact that the grid is a very verbal situation in which they might not feel at ease, led to a consideration of these techniques. Ravenette's methods involved the use of photographs of same age, same sex children and supplied constructs with special reference to parents, teachers, the peer group and the child's own feelings in the belief that a "child's attitude towards significant others would be instrumental in behaviour determination" (Ravenette, op. cit). In the Ravenette study further techniques were developed, using Pickford Projective Pictures where either the child was asked to relate two or three stories suggested by one of the pictures or to indicate similarities and differences between three pictures. The picture technique has been modified by M. Bender, working as a psychologist in Community Mental Health with adults who are S.N. or S.S.N. and been found to work. He used T.A.T. or ORT sets of pictures and restricted the elements to specific pictures.

As a method of rating the grid, consideration was given to Kilpatrick and Cantrell's self-anchoring scale. For this, constructs are obtained by triadic elicitation but these constructs are then presented pictorially by a ladder containing ten rungs. The top rung, representing ten, is the best

and the bottom rung - zero - is the lowest score. The subject is asked to rate each construct by placing an x on the ladder at the rung which represents their present feelings; a separate ladder is used for each construct. (Details of this and many other techniques, with advantages and disadvantages listed, may be found in Fransella and Bannister, 1977).

Eventually it was decided that a rating scale of one to five provided adequate scope for the research. Some suggestions of Ravenette's were included in the final presentation of the material (see later note) and it was decided to pilot a method supplying all of the elements and some of the constructs.

Supplying the Constructs

Adams-Webber (1970) reviewed many studies and suggested that constructs can be supplied. This is still an area for debate but it is now a well tried and established method and has been found to produce meaningful results.

Ryle (1975) justifies the use of supplied constructs by noting that "Kelly paid rather little attention to the developmental and social processes" Ryle believes this is because Kelly was concerned with the personal rather than the social and Ryle believes that the individuality corollary (persons differ from each other in their construction of events) would be strengthened by the additional statement that people resemble each other in their construction of events.

However, Pope and Keen (1981) disagree with Ryle and point out that Kelly "did raise the possibility of shared areas of personal meaning and this is explicit in his commonality corollary "to the extent that one person

employs a constructions of experience similar to that employed by another, his processes are psychologically similar to those of the other person". (p. 157, 1981).

Bannister and Fransella (1971) suggest that although it seems that people prefer to use their own constructs, rather than those provided for them by others, it nevertheless appears that the same degree of differentiation may be found in carefully selected supplied constructs as in those of the individual's own elicitation.

Bannister and Mair (1968) suggest that using supplied constructs is useful in certain cases, notably in experiments where hypotheses have been formulated and also where comparison of groups is involved. They warn, however, that the researcher may assume that the polar adjectives or phrases he provides are the verbal equivalents of the psychological dimensions in which he is interested. This latter point is very important and needs to be constantly borne in mind by researchers.

For the first phase of the study it was possible, because of the time available, to allow respondents to elicit their own constructs. Some constructs were also provided, but there was no compulsion to use them, students could do so if they wished. For the second phase of the study practicalities dictated that it would be necessary to provide all the constructs. While it is acknowledged that this is not an ideal situation care was taken to use constructs arising from areas of concern elucidated either in the interview or in the grids elicited during the first phase of the study.

Supplying the elements

This is a readily acceptable procedure as it is little removed from Kelly's original ideas. It has become widely accepted since the elements 'ME AS I AM', and 'ME AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE' (ideal self) have proved very useful in clinical studies and it is through clinical use that the grid has been developed.

The main danger in supplying both the constructs and the elements seems to be that the person may be unable to apply all the constructs to all the elements in a meaningful way. There is always the doubt that perhaps the construct is only being applied to these elements because the person has been requested to do so.

In both phases of the study all the elements were supplied.

Design of the grid for the first phase of the study.

Kelly (1955) produced a series of questions which he used with children to help them in the task of elicitation of a grid. In the answers to these questions the child can state how he views his peers, teachers, parents and so on, how he understands what they are like, what he would like to happen and how such changes could make a difference to his world. The questions are as follows:

The trouble with most ..... is .....
They are like that because .....
Another reason they are like that is .....
It would be better if .....
What difference would that make .....
What difference would that make to you .....

If, for the purposes of this study we fill in the first blanks with the words 'adults with literacy difficulties' it can be seen than an

enlightening discussion could follow. In order to formulate meaningful elements consideration was given to these questions and the sort of answers they would evoke. The questions had, in effect, already been asked in the semi-structured interviews previously conducted with the respondents, although not in the same form as the above questions. Because the information existed in the transcripts of the interview, it was not felt necessary to pose the questions to the respondents. In fact, the interviews, presenting as they did quite detailed pictures of the adult semi-literate's world, were a rich source of data for the formulation of elements and constructs.

In searching for elements to use in the study several related so obviously to the information being sought that the necessity for their inclusion was immediately obvious. These were 'ME AS I USED TO BE', 'ME AS I AM NOW' and 'ME AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE'. The relationship between 'AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES' and 'AS I AM NOW' could indicate if a shift in the self-image had occurred during this time, while the distance between the present self and the ideal self could provide information which may indicate how closely the person matched their ideal self.

Other elements considered important were 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING AND SPELLING HARD' and 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING AND SPELLING EASY' as it was thought fruitful to observe to what extent the respondent related to these. For example did the 'IDEAL SELF' closely match 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING AND SPELLING EASY'? This could suggest a rather simple construct system which 'blamed' all the inadequacies felt to be present in life on literacy and saw the irradication of literacy problems as an end to all troubles. Obviously, there is a danger in such

an attitude. 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING AND SPELLING HARD' could be related to 'ME AS I WAS BEFORE CLASSES' and show how closely the person identified with this group, and, through 'ME AS I AM NOW' how closely, if at all, they continued to do so.

Of the situations in which semi-literates find themselves in difficulty it is, obviously, those connected with work, applying for jobs and filling in forms which are felt to be most stressful. This was re-iterated in all the interviews, so it was decided to include form filling/applying for jobs as one element, while placing 'work' as a separate element. This was because in some cases in the interviews there seemed to be satisfaction with the present job, whereas in other cases the opposite applied. It was thought useful to observe if there had been any shift in attitude with regard to these elements since tuition began.

From the situations we all face in everyday life several possibilities were examined for inclusion in the grid. Finally, it was decided that the 'blanket' term 'ME WITH STRANGERS' would give a general picture of how threatened or otherwise the person felt in his/her less intimate relationships.

Another area of importance was the family and their supportive or non-supportive role. Many of the respondents in the interviews referred to feelings of shame in their relationship with their children. These feelings arose because of such incidents as being unable to answer questions about homework or read bedtime stories. One student's remarks express this succinctly:

> "My little girl said 'Oh, let Mummy read it. Your reading is so jiggly and slow and you don't put expression in it'. I mean, you feel so small. Your own kid saying that to you. You could just crawl in a hole".

This student is exceptional in that he attempted to read to his children. Many answer their children's queries for spelling help, homework assistance and so on, with "Go and ask your mother/father I haven't time now". References are often made to the fear of appearing inadequate in the child's eyes, as has been noted in the chapter analysing the interviews. In fact, sometimes this is given as motivation for attending classes. Because of this it was decided to use two separate elements for the family situation 'ME WITH THE CHILDREN' and 'ME WITH MY PARTNER'. The use of the word 'partner' rather than husband or wife was chosen with considerable care so that non-heterosexuals or couples living together, but not married, would still feel able to use that element.

When the ten elements had been finally selected and set out in the form of a matrix it was felt that the continual use of the term 'me' looked rather threatening. It was, therefore, decided to remove the word 'me' from elements where this was possible without detracting from comprehensibility. The final wording of the elements was as follows:

1. People who find reading, writing and spelling comes easy.
2. People who find reading, writing, spelling hard.
3. Filling in forms/applying for jobs.
4. As I used to be before classes.
5. As I am now.
6. As I would like to be.
7. With strangers.
8. At work.
9. With my partner
10. With the children.

They are given in the order in which they appeared in the matrix. The 'partner' and 'children' elements were placed penultimately and last so that

those without a partner or children knew they just had to leave the last column(s) blank. The more general elements appeared first as it was felt they would be easiest to rate. 'FILLING IN FORMS/APPLYING FOR JOBS' followed these as this was felt to be fairly easy to categorize also. Following these were 'AS I USED TO BE', 'AS I AM' and 'AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE'. It was felt these may be more difficult to rate but they were placed in chronological order to ease the task of rating. The most 'neutral' elements in that they may or may not be difficult to rate, followed. The elements which referred to the family were placed last. The difference that this made to the ease with which the grid could be filled in justified its priority over any other consideration, particularly as the respondents were adults likely to find this a demanding situation.

Many notions in the interviews recurred, illustrating the importance given to them by the respondents. Consideration was given to the possibility of supplying constructs as well as elements. The remarks referred to the following, which became the constructs:

confidence/lacking in confidence
remembers things/doesn't remember things
sticks at things/ gives up
takes life as it comes/worries
successful/unsuccessful

The reason for inclusion of some of these constructs will be immediately obvious. In the interviews and in general conversation quite frequent reference is made to difficulty with memory, often as a justification for spelling weaknesses. The construct 'STICKS AT THINGS/GIVES UP' is also used in the same sort of way; an inability to 'stick at things' perhaps being used in conversation about incompleted homework. It was felt that to supply them as constructs would reveal whether there was any patterning in the way in which they were applied to the elements.

The construct 'TAKES LIFE AS IT COMES/WORRIES' is not used as a justification in the above sense (to explain weaknesses in literacy skills) but as an explanation of how a person with literacy difficulties has to approach life generally. Several times in the interviews references were made to the fact that other people without literacy difficulties could take life as it comes because they did not have to live with the constant worry of appearing inadequate. It was felt it would be interesting to observe if this, and the construct 'SUCCESSFUL/UNSUCCESSFUL' were applied to the elements in a rather simplistic way which would suggest a division between those with literacy problems and those without literacy difficulties, rather than a more complex and interwoven picture.

The constructs supplied were given after individual constructs had been elicited and there was no compulsion that they be used, only the suggestion they they could be if desired. Although this might mean sacrificing the possibility of a direct comparison between the grids, a 'truer' overall picture would emerge from each grid if the person was allowed to reject the construct if they felt so inclined.

The grid was prepared for presentation to the respondents by typing the elements along the top of the matrix. There were eleven spaces at the side for insertion of the constructs. In the first of these spaces was typed the construct 'HAPPY/UNHAPPY'. This was used by the researcher as an example when demonstrating the method of eliciting constructs and the respondents were told they could rate it if they wished.

Sample for the first phase of the study

Grids were elicited from the researcher's students in two groups, each of five. The age range was 20 - 55 years. All the sample were male.

Administration of the grid for the first phase of the study

Restrictions of time and distance meant that it was not possible to consider individual grid elicitation. Since the grid is a demanding task, even for those who are quite verbally sophisticated and highly educated, very careful thought had to be given to the method of administration to adults who felt unsure in situations which demanded the sort of skills from them that grid elicitation would require. Usually on a grid, the elements are numbered. But it was felt that this may have caused confusion with the numbers which would be used to rank each construct so instead of numbers, letters were used.

An individual pack was prepared for the respondents. Each pack contained:

1. the typed grid described above
2. ten pieces of card each with an element and its corresponding letter written on it
3. five cards (3 x 5) numbered from one to five, for ranking
4. thirty sheets of paper (4 x 1) on which could be written the constructs.

The grid was piloted with a small group of literacy students at a different establishment to that where the research was being carried out. No changes were made in the procedure after the pilot.

In all three cases a classroom was the venue.

A list of random numbers (taken from 'Statistics Tables' H.R. Neave. George Allen Unwin 1978) and converted from numbers into letters was written on the blackboard. Each of these letters presented an element. They were placed in triadic groups for later elicitation. Also on the blackboard was a copy of the grid contained in each individual pack. These were written on the board prior to the students' arrival. On

arrival the group were invited to examine their packs. Although none of the groups were illiterate, in order to use the same technique in cases where the researcher would not necessarily be aware of the standard of literacy in the group, the researcher used a pack identical to that given to the students, as well as using the blackboard. Firstly, each element card was held up and the letter called out. When each student had identified the card by the letter, the element was read out. When this was completed the respondents were asked to place the element cards on the desk in front of them and to line up the numbered cards, one to five, at the top of the desk. The blank cards were left to one side.

When this had been completed the researcher briefly explained triadic elicitation and then demonstrated it. This was done by using a triad of letters and the grid on the blackboard and eliciting the construct 'HAPPY/UNHAPPY.' A rating was given to each element ensuring that the whole range of numbers were used, and these were filled in on the blackboard. The method of rating was explained by following Ravenette's example where he found, working with children, that the concept of a 'mark out of five' worked well.

The group were then asked to gather round a desk where the researcher repeated the process, using the pack, so that the layout and filling in of the construct cards could be observed. The respondents were then asked if they wished to ask questions. When these had been dealt with they were invited to fill in their own ratings for the construct 'HAPPY/UNHAPPY' if they so wished. Otherwise they were to use the letters from the blackboard and proceed straight to the next triad.

The sample were advised that initially they should call the researcher before they transferred their ratings from the cards to the grid form. It

was also stressed that spelling was unimportant and that the supplied card was just for their convenience. If they were unsure of a spelling and did not want to guess it they were to call the researcher and ask, rather than just choose another word. After the initial check that the information was being transferred correctly to the grid most subjects were happy to transfer the information themselves, occasionally asking for spelling help. Only one person seemed intimidated by the fact that the form was being kept by the researcher so that he asked that the form be completed for him each time he transferred the construct to the form.

The total administration time was approximately two hours for each group. During this time the researcher moved round the group talking to individuals if they had difficulty in eliciting a construct. When some subjects had elicited six constructs and appeared to be experiencing difficulty in producing any more the researcher wrote the supplied constructs on the board and suggested these could be used if desired. It was feared that other subjects would then cease to use their own constructs but this proved to be unfounded. It occurred only in one case and the subject was having such difficulty it is doubtful if further constructs would otherwise have been elicited. Some respondents filled in all ten boxes using their own constructs. Others used those supplied to them after they had elicited some more of their own.

When a subject felt they had completed the grid the researcher examined the grid and if necessary asked them about any apparent discrepancies in the numbering. This lessened the need for feedback because in the case of research carried out at some distance it could be unrealistic to proceed otherwise than on the assumption that the respondent would not be seen again.

An example of a grid in which constructs were elicited from the respondents.

	A People who find reading, writing, spelling comes easy	B People who find reading, writing, spelling hard	C Filling in forms/ applying for jobs	D As I used to be before classes	E As I am now	F As I would like to be	G With strangers	H At work	I With my partner	J With the children	FIGURE 1
UN-HAPPY	5	1	1	1	3	5	3	4	4	4	~~UN~~HAPPY
terrible	5	1	1	1	3	5	3	4	4	4	lovely
sad	5	1	2	1	3	5	4	5	4	5	marvellous
disenchanted	5	1	3	1	3	5	3	4	4	4	contented
SERRED	5	1	2	1	3	5	3	4	4	4	DONT CARE
UNSURE	5	1	3	1	3	5	3	4	4	4	CONFIDENT
NERVOUS	5	1	1	1	3	5	2	4	5	5	NOT NERVOUS
MISERABLE ~~ERRY~~	5	1	1	1	3	5	3	4	4	5	MERRY ~~MISERABLE~~
UN EASY	5	1	1	1	3	5	1	4	5	5	EASY
EDGY	5	1	1	1	3	5	1	5	4	3	STEADY
NOT INDEPENDENT	5	1	3	1	3	5	3	3	4	4	INDEPENDENT

Analysis of the grids in the first phase of the study [1]

There are two hypotheses from the first phase of the study which are relevant to consider here. They are:

Hypothesis 1A - the distance between the respondents ideal self and the self prior to tuition (as expressed on the repertory grids) will be greater than that between the ideal self and the present self on the repertory grid. ie. Respondents will view themselves less negatively after tuition than before, as expressed on the repertory grid. N.B. All respondents will have received at least one year's tuition.

Hypothesis 1D - Those respondents who give continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid are likely to be those who, in the interview, perceive the cause for their past literacy failure to have an internal locus of control orientations.

Hypothesis 1A was confirmed at the 5% level.

Hypothesis 1D presented problems of analysis in finding a suitable test, as very small frequencies were involved. The number of respondents giving continuing negative perceptions of self was too small, from an initial sample size of ten, to allow the 5% significance level to be applied. Therefore, the hypothesis could not be tested. However, since the results seemed to show that a pattern existed this hypothesis was tested on the second, larger sample.

A discussion of the analysis of these hypotheses and the results obtained in the first phase of the study now follows.

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(1) **In discussing the grid findings individual grids are used as examples and discussed in detail. No attempt has been made to aggregate the grid findings and discuss them in this way. While there has been a degree of cross referencing it is felt the grid is viewed more appropriately as an idiographic measure and aggregation would be inappropriate. (See Shaw, M.L.G. 1980 for fuller discussion of this point).**

The grids were analysed using Shaw's FOCUS program (1980). FOCUS is a cluster analysis technique, re-ordering constructs and elements so that a FOCUSed grid gives the cloest similarity between adjacent constructs and elements. (For full details see Shaw 1980).

Hypothesis 1A was analysed in the following way. By isolating the three elements 'AS I WAS BEFORE CLASSES', 'AS I AM NOW' and 'AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE', the relationship of the respondent to his ideal self image, prior to the commencement of tuition and at the present time, could be shown. Any closing of this gap since tuition commenced was taken as a positive shift in self image, which was measured in percentage terms. (See figure 2)

Hypothesis 1D was analysed as follows.
Having ascertained the incremental shifts in self image, the rating given to each construct for the three elements was noted on the individual grids. Where a construct remained at the same negative rating for both the elements 'AS I WAS BEFORE CLASSES' and 'AS I AM NOW', this was deemed to represent a continuing sense of learned helplessness. Where the ratings on every construct had moved away from the negative, showing a positive shift on all the constructs since the commencement of tuition, this was taken to demonstrate increased freedom from feelings of failure.

Partly because of difficulties experienced by previous researchers (Charnley 1978) in attempting to apply standardized reading and spelling age tests to adult literacy students, no attempt was made to collect such data. It was also felt it would be unnecessarily stressful to the respondents. Instead, the respondents were asked the question 'Do you think there has been an improvement in your reading/writing/ spelling?' as part of the interview schedule.

The interviews were also analysed for the attributions of failure (Abramson et al, 1978) given by each respondent in answer to the question 'Why do you think you had difficulties with reading/writing/spelling?' As the interviews were semi-structured any other remark(s) pertaining to attributions of failure, but made in some other part of the interview, were also noted.

In order to clarify the method of arriving at the attribution for failure given by the respondent and in order to reiterate its importance in learning difficulties ,Seligman's notion of learned helplessness and the reformulation of this theory (Abramson et al 1978) will be reiterated here although they have been discussed in an earlier chapter.

Seligman reached this theory through a conclusion that motivation and emotion are more plastic than cognition and that this can have a dramatic effect upon performance. He noted,

> "I am convinced that certain arrangements of environmental contingencies will produce a child who believes he is helpless - that he cannot succeed - and that other contingencies will produce a child who believes that his responses matter - that he can control his little world. If a child believes he is helpless he will perform stupidly, regardless of his I.Q. If a child believes he is helpless he will not write piano sonatas regardless of his inherent musical genius. On the other hand, if a child believes he has control and mastery he may out perform more talented peers who lack such a belief. And most important, how readily a person believes in his own helplessness or mastery is shaped by his experience with controllable and uncontrollable events". (Seligman 1975, p. 137-136).

The original hypothesis has been reformulated: (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale 1978) "The helpless individual first finds out that certain outcomes and responses are independent then he makes an attribution about the cause. This attribution affects his expectations about future response/ outcome relations and thereby determines the chronicity, generality and to some degree the intensity, of the deficits". (p. 56, 1978). It is

important how general the given attribution is because "a global attribution implies that helplessness will occur across situations, whereas a specific attribution implies helplessness only in the original situation" (op. cit p. 57). This global/specific dimension has been added by Abramson et al, to the two dimensions external/internal, stable/unstable, already explained by attribution theorists. (Weiner 1974). Abramson et al, point out that "when a bad outcome occurs", the individual can interpret this in several ways. Take the situation in which X failed an examination. Here are some possible alternative attributions. X may say, "I failed the exam because I am stupid". Lack of ability is a global, stable and internal attribution which means that feelings of helplessness will occur across situations. If X stated "I failed that exam because I had a headache" this is a specific, unstable, internal attribution which need not apply to other situations. X may say "I failed the exam because they set bad exam papers". This attribution is specific, stable and external and need not apply to other situations. If X stated, "I failed the exam because it's Friday 13th, and that's unlucky", this is a global, stable, external attribution, which will apply to other situations occurring only on that day.

Of these attributions the one which is most likely to affect self esteem is a global, stable, internal attribution, since this can apply to every new situation. Abramson et al, hypothesize that in order to reach full potential in the cognitive and motivational domains, self esteem should be positive and, therefore, any learned helplessness experienced should be attributed in such a way, that it does not affect self esteem.

As previously stated in the interview chapter definitions were as follows:

External - blame for past literacy failure attributed to outside factors e.g. school.

Mixed - some blame on external factors, some on self.

Internal Unstable - blaming the self, although not in such away that this would be perceived across situations e.g. I never made an effort because I found school boring.

Internal Stable global - blaming the self in a way that can be perceived across situations, e.g. "I'm a slow learner".

N.B. (unless otherwise stated the attributions are assumed to be specific).

If these ten grids are analysed within Abramson et al's theoretical framework and in conjunction with attributions for literacy failure given in the interviews it can be seen that two patterns emerge. It should be remembered that all the respondents, except one, perceive an increase in self esteem as measured by a moving closer to the ideal self on the repertory grid. All the respondents reported an improvement in their literacy skills.

Results and discussion of the initial study

All the grids (except one considered in detail elsewhere) showed an increase in self esteem as measured by a moving closer to the ideal self on the repertory grid. This increase in self esteem confirms the findings from an analysis of the interviews conducted during this study. It also confirms part of Charnley's study (Ph.D. 1978) where, using interview techniques as his main methodology, Charnley isolated five categories for success placing particular emphasis on the respondent 'feeling better in himself'.

Further analysis combining the researcher's interview findings with perspectives illuminated by the grid technique and analysing the findings

within Abramson et al's theoretical framework allowed a more complex pattern to emerge.

The grids showed that within this positive shift in self-esteem, two patterns existed.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

About two-thirds of the sample showed a small positive shift in self-esteem, as measured by a moving closer (approx. 20%) to the ideal self. However, there remained on these grids continuing and unchanged negative self perceptions. These grids were presumed to illustrate the perpetuation of a sense of learned helplessness (Abramson et al 1978 op. cit.). The remaining grids showed a greater positive shift (approx. 50%) in self esteem, reflected in a positive gain in the ratings on all constructs. These grids were presumed to show increasing freedom from a sense of helplessness.

The answers to the question in the interview, 'Why do you think you had difficulties with reading/writing/spelling?' were analysed to discover the attributions which were being made for their perceived failure in literacy skills.

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

Of those who showed a greater shift in positive self esteem, one gave external attributions and three gave mixed attributions. Of those showing a smaller improvement and continuing negative self perceptions, four gave internal attributions and two gave mixed attributions.

FIGURE 2

PERCENTAGE RELATIONSHIP TO ELEMENT 3 (IDEAL SELF) OF ELEMENT 1 (FORMER SELF) AND ELEMENT 2 (REAL SELF)

subject number	element 1 (as I used to be)	element 2 (as I am now)	increase	classification
7	32%	85%	53%	improved on all constructs
10	0%	50%	50%	
5	20%	56%	36%	
2	40%	65%	25%	
6	59%	84%	25%	continuing negative perceptions of self
9	34%	56%	22%	
4	19%	41%	22%	
3	0	21%	21%	
8	65%	70%	5%	
1	65%	43%	-22%	decrease in self esteem

FIGURE 3

ANALYSIS OF ATTRIBUTIONS GIVEN DURING INTERVIEW

GRIDS SHOWING CONTINUING NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF SELF

subject number	attribution on interview schedule	definitions of attribution
1	self	internal
3	"	"
4	"	"
6	"	"
8	self/school	internal and external
9	"	"

GRIDS SHOWING IMPROVEMENT ON ALL CONSTRUCTS

10	war/school	external
2	school/self	external and internal
5	"	"
7	"	"

As can be seen from the table, for one student (subject 1) the pervasive nature of internal, stable, global attributions caused a decrease in self esteem from the time he began classes. An analysis of his grid and interview suggested that his improved literacy skills only highlighted the gap between his present competence and what he wished to achieve. He stated in his interview "I get so frustrated, now when I can't spell that its making it worse reallly, because I'm thinking I should be able to do it ... so really it's just making me worse".

The attribution results approximate to those of Butkowsky and Willows (1979) who used a different methodology to discover attributions in good, average and poor readers and found that 12% of good, 13% of average and 68% of poor readers gave internal attributions of failure.

All the respondents in the sample replied to the question, 'Do you think there has been an improvement in your reading/writing/spelling?' in the affirmative. Therefore, the continuing negative perceptions of self need to be viewed within the framework of a perceived improvement in literacy skills.

To exemplify the persistence of feelings of learned helplessness and contingent perceptions of low self esteem subject 4's FOCUSed grid (see Figure 4) and relevant passages of the interview will be discussed in detail.

INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE

Although this subject showed a small positive shift in self image there remained unchanged negative perceptions of self on the important construct

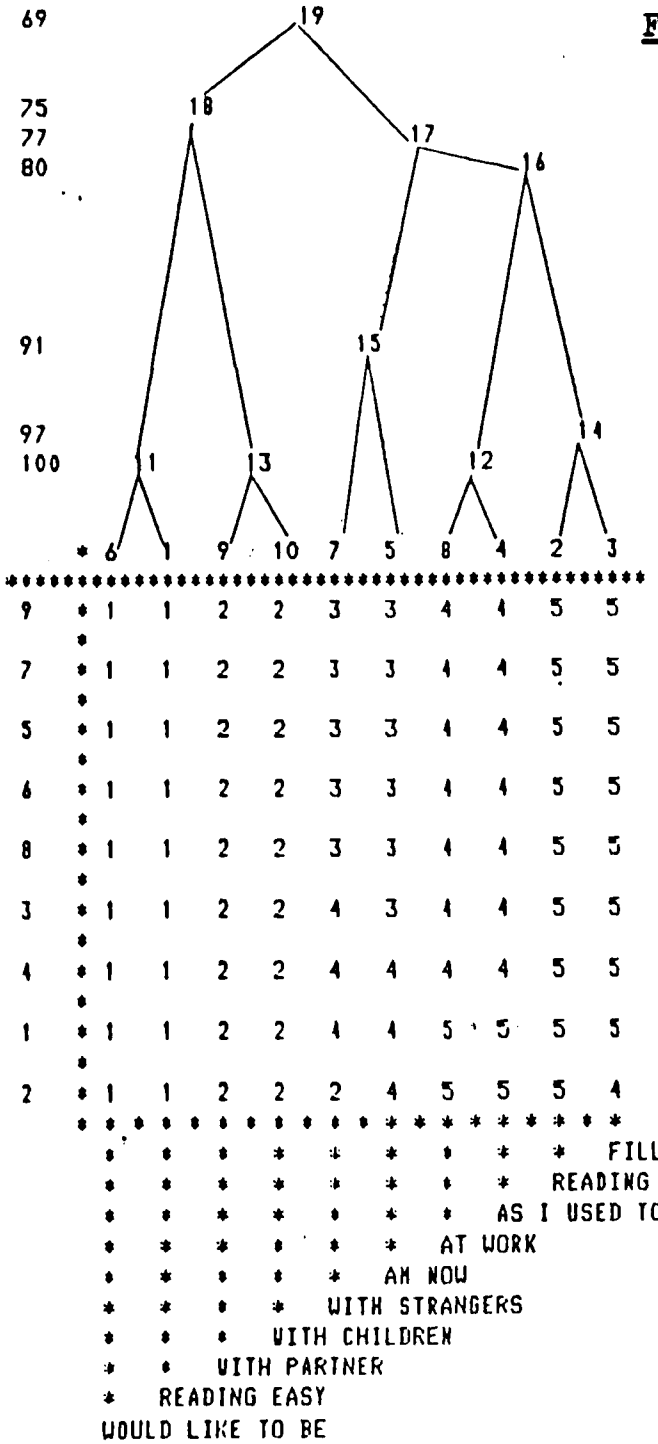


FIGURE 4 This shows subject 4's FOCUSed grid. The tree showing the grouping of the elements appears at the top of the figure. The beginning of the tree, where the figure 100 appears, shows pairs of figures which are rated at 100% similarity match (e.g. 6 and 1). 6 and 1 are numerical representations of elements. The equivalent, expressed as a verbal label, appears at the bottom of the grid e.g. 6 = AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE. As the tree ascends the matching score decreases, in this case to a 69% similarity match.

The tree to the right shows the grouping of the constructs which are also expressed numerically and verbally. The % matching score is printed at the top of the tree. (This grid is explained fully in the text).

N.B. For those unfamiliar with interpreting a FOCUSed grid further guidance is given in chap. 5 of Pope, M. and Keen, T. 'Personal Construct Psychology and Education'.

100 90 80 70 60 50	40 30 20
9 TAKES LIFE AS	IT COMES - WORRIES
7 EASY	UNEASY
5 CONFIDENT	APPREHENSIVE
6 UNTROUBLED	TROUBLESOME
8 REMEMBERS THINGS	DOESN'T REMEMBER
3 UNLIMITED	LIMITED
4 USEFUL	USELESS
1 HAPPY	UNHAPPY
2 NOT FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED

of uselessness. There was no change in the feelings of 'uselessness' from the time prior to tuition to the time the grid was elicited, which covered a period of two years.

There was 100% similarity between 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING EASY' and 'AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE' (ideal self). Not surprisingly both elements were viewed positively, seen as able to take life as it comes, feel easy, confident, untroubled, useful, happy, free from frustration and unlimited. There was 100% similarity between '(me) AT WORK' and 'AS I WAS BEFORE CLASSES'. The situations were viewed negatively as quite worrying and troublesome causing some unease and apprehensiveness. In these contexts the subject found difficulty remembering things and felt very unhappy and frustrated and quite useless and limited. These perceptions indicate persistent feelings of inadequacy and low self esteem in the situation of his present job, despite improvement in literacy skills. Understandably, 'FILLING IN FORMS/APPLYING FOR JOBS' and 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING HARD' were clustered at a 97% level of similarity. All were viewed in a very negative fashion on all constructs. However, the subject felt less frustrated in the form filling situation than 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING HARD'. This improvement is indicative of the slight improvement in self-esteem. However, 'AS I AM NOW' was viewed with ambiguity on all constructs, except unhappiness and uselessness, both of which were viewed negatively, and there had been no change in the feelings of uselessness since prior to tuition, suggesting that his perceptions of self had not increased to a really meaningful degree.

In the interview the subject's attributions were solely stable, internal and global, confirming that low self esteem would be perceived across

situations. During the interview, in answer to the question, "Why do you think you had difficulties with reading/writing/spelling?" the subject stated unequivocally, "I suppose I'm just thick ... I haven't got a retentive mind". The enduring nature of the negative perceptions of self were highlighted by the use of the present tense, despite the perceived improvement in literacy skills.

Subject 7 exemplified the smaller number of grids which showed a greater positive shift in self esteem reflected by the positive rating which was given to all constructs. There was 100% similarity between 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING EASY' and 'WITH MY PARTNER'; both were viewed positively; 'AS I AM NOW' clustered with these at 89% similarity and showed the subject viewed himself as quite happy, successful, joyous, confident, easy going, relaxed and able to take life as it comes. On these last three constructs the subject viewed himself more positively than 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING EASY' and, in fact, on these constructs he matched his ideal self.

The ideal self was viewed as happy, confident, relaxed, joyous, successful, fairly easy going and able to take life as it comes.

'AS I WAS BEFORE CLASSES' was viewed rather negatively as quite nervous, not very relaxed, a bit afraid and worried, inclined to give up and find life difficult. There remained uncertainty over the state of happiness. This subject showed a marked gain in self esteem reflected on all the constructs in this grid. During the interview, in answer to the question concerning literacy difficulties he replied with mixed attributions, blaming himself as a lazy learner (internal, stable, global), but also stressing that he missed a lot of school throughout his childhood, due to hospitalization (external, stable, specific). This subject while admitting

laziness, refused to internalise all the blame; rather it was the fault of chance circumstances related to his health that caused his literacy problems. As his literacy skills improved, because he blamed external causes for prior failure, he may have overcome his laziness. Not surprisingly this grid reflected clear positive gain in his affective domain, mirrored in the considerable increment in self-esteem.

Abramson's (et al) hypothesis was broadly confirmed in that, of those respondents showing the most marked gains in self esteem, none gave only internal, stable, global attributions. However, three out of four who showed the greater increments in self esteem gave mixed attributions, which suggests that while the attribution framework is a useful one, definition may be so complex that some refining is still needed.

The second phase of the study

The second phase of the study was conducted with a much larger sample so certain changes were made in design and methodology.

In order to clarify definitions for the second, larger sample it was decided that as well as self report questions, Levenson's IPC Scale would be used as a confirmatory tool for assessing locus of control. (A full discussion of these methodologies is given in a separate chapter. For clarification of analysis they will be described briefly here also).

The sample for the second phase of the study

During the second phase of the study data was collected from a further fifty eight respondents. Data was collected at three different venues. There were five groups of six subjects, four groups of five subjects

and two groups with four subjects.

One class of six pupils was immediately recognisable as unuseable since they were second language students.

Although it had been specified that only indigenous English speakers were relevant to the study the researcher obviously collected the data any way, in order not to offend the students or the organizing establishment. A secondary numbering system was used so that such irrelevant data would not interfere with the final numbering system. No attempt was made to analyse the data.

Of the remaining students, one had to be discarded because he had not received tuition for the necessary length of time. Another student was omitted, partly on the advice of a tutor who stated "That student's ESN and hasn't a clue what he was supposed to be doing, he just made pretty patterns with the numbers", and partly because he hadn't completed any of the tasks anyway.

One further student was not included because the researcher felt that the subject had been unduly influenced by his own tutor. In some of the classes a scheme was operating where a paid tutor was helped by voluntary tutors who worked on a one to one basis within the group. In most cases the tutor's were splendidly neutral, sitting quietly beside their students. However, one tutor leaned constantly over her student and when the student was rating the element 'AS I AM NOW' she said, "Oh, you can't put that. You can't put you feel the same as you used to before classes. Don't you dare!" Although the researcher reiterated that tutors should not comment on the student's response and only offer

help with writing or spelling, the respondent had obviously been intimidated by his tutor. During feedback the researcher encouraged the respondent to reassess any numbers if he wished to. However, he declined and since he then had not given himself the same rating on 'AS I USED TO BE' and 'AS I AM NOW' on any constructs, his grid was removed as this did not seem to be a reflection of his 'true feelings'.

This left a sample size of forty nine. The age range was 17 - 58 years.

Design of the grid for administration to the second sample

The size of the first sample (ten) and the conditions of the elicitation of the grid (two hours could be spent on elicitation) meant that some changes had to be made in the collection of data for the second, much larger, sample.

In order to achieve continuity in the collection of data and also to ensure as little disruption to the students' normal programme as possible, it was essential that all the data be collected in one session. In all cases this meant that those who had agreed to cooperate in the research were prepared to allow the researcher to take up the whole of one evening session in the collection of data. As a result there was a total of two hours in which to elicit a grid, administer Eysenck's P.I., and Levenson's IPC and receive answers to the self report questions.

Obviously, in dealing with students who do not feel very relaxed in situations requiring them to exercise writing skills it was important that initially the time be spent in explaining the research to the respondents in order to enlist their cooperation, and to allow them to become more relaxed.

Because of these restrictions it was decided that in the second study all the elements and constructs would have be supplied and feedback severely restricted. As the elements had already been supplied in the original study and selected with care for their relevance to areas of interest within the scope of the thesis the same elements were again used. The only change was to reverse the order of elements one and two. This was carried out as a result of discussion with the initial sample who suggested that they found it easier to think about people who had reading difficulties as they identified more closely with this group, so element one became 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING AND SPELLING HARD' and element two 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING, SPELLING COMES EASY'.

During the initial research not all the constructs were supplied, but areas of consensus arising from the interviews were given as constructs which could be used if desired.

In the second phase of the study the most frequently applied of these constructs and other elicited constructs from the grids of the first study, were considered alongside with the conversation which arose sponteneously amongst the researcher's students during the feedback session in the initial research when they elucidated important areas to them in the process of becoming literate. The danger of supplying constructs needs to be constantly borne in mind. It is summarized by Pope and Keen (1981)

> "One should remember whatever meaning words may have they are assigned or ascribed to them by people. Thus, when a person is provided with the investigator's labels or construct poles the meaning ascribed to those labels may not be isomorphic with the meaning the investigator assumes these labels hold. Thus, if one is forced through

> circumstances to use provided constructs.... one should be conscious of the need for extensive preliminary work to establish a reasonable selection of constructs and the need for caution during the interpretation phase". (p. 41).

The researcher felt it was important that all the words used should come from the respondents and not be imposed upon them by the researcher. It seemed, given necessary pragmatic restrictions, the best compromise was to ensure that only constructs chosen or elicited by the initial group of respondents were used and that when these respondents' constructs were imposed on other subjects care was taken to explain the meaning given to these verbal labels, by those originating them. The final selection was as follows:

unhappy/happy
lacking in confidence/confident
gives up/sticks at things
useless/useful
limited/unlimited
worries/takes life as it comes
doesn't remember things/remembers things

They appeared in that order on the grid, consideration being given to ease of rating. Each respondent received a pack containing the grid with the elements and constructs already filled in and the EPI, Levenson's IPC and a blank sheet of paper for the self report questions. All these were clipped together with a paper clip, the grid appearing on top.

In every case the classroom where the lesson normally took place was the venue.

Elicitation of the grid for the second phase of the study.

Since all the elements and constructs were supplied for the second study the only procedure which was repeated from the first sample was to explain

the rating system for the grid. Here, again Ravenette's method was used, the explanation being that each 'box' had to be given a mark out of five. In order to avoid the respondents becoming confused about the rating system it was reiterated that one out of five was the lowest mark and five out of five was the highest. The researcher then went on to explain each of the grades in the following manner. "Five out of five is the best, it's the highest mark you can give. Four is quite high. Three is a mixture a bit high, a bit low, an inbetween number. Two is quite low and one is as low as can possibly be". The information was then summarized, beginning at one and repeating through to five.

Each respondent had on their desk in front of them a grid with the elements and constructs already written in. Having explained the rating system the researcher, standing in front of the group, held up a copy of the grid and pointed to each element and construct in turn, reading each one out as she pointed. This was to ensure that each element and construct was understood and to eliminate any difficulty a respondent may have found in reading any of the words. (Where possible words were kept as simple as possible, but words like 'confidence' may have caused difficulty to those with restricted reading skills).

This task was deliberately carried out very slowly with considerable repetition to ensure that those with very weak literacy skills would be able to fully understand. Also, since it was the first task of data collection the researcher was aware that there was bound to be some tension which may initially inhibit the respondent's comprehension.

In order to further ease any possible tension the researcher then went on to stress to the respondents that they were the experts who had something to tell her - she could only guess what they felt.

It was then explained to the subjects that the situations (elements) and words describing how the people felt (constructs) were chosen by the researcher's own students because they had experienced them and thought they were important in giving a picture of what it felt like to be someone who had difficulties with reading, writing and/or spelling. Each element was then read out individually and discussed. Where comprehension could be clarified by doing so the constructs were presented to the respondents in the contexts in which they had arisen.

This did not seem necessary in the case of the first two constructs (UPHAPPY/HAPPY, LACKING IN CONFIDENCE/CONFIDENT). The researcher noted that many of her students had referred to these notions, but no particular context was evoked. The construct 'GIVES UP/STICKS AT THINGS' was discussed, focus was given to students' remarks that they often gave up very quickly when confronted with a task involving literacy skills.

In the case of the constructs 'USELESS/USEFUL' and 'LIMITED/UNLIMITED' relevant remarks made by the students were quoted verbatim:

> "(not being able to read, write and spell properly) it gets you in so many ways, not just the reading and writing parts. You feel useless, just useless".
>
> "There's so many things you can't do. (If you have literacy difficulties). To me it seemed everyone else could do just what they wanted. They see a job they fancied - right, have a go! Not me. No chance. My life was really limited".

The construct 'WORRIES/TAKES LIFE AS IT COMES' was explained in the same way using the following quotation:

> "It's all right if you can read you can take life as it comes. For me it's worry all the time 'Am I going to get found out? Can I go so and so place?'".

The construct 'REMEMBERS THINGS/DOESN'T REMEMBER THINGS' was explained by noting that while students felt that remembering was important some felt they weren't able to remember and that caused difficulties, and others felt they had to remember things in order to ensure they wouldn't get 'caught out' in a situation which could expose their literacy difficulties.

On completion of the discussion of the elements and constructs the researcher explained elicitation of a rating. This was accomplished using the same technique as with the first sample. The construct 'HAPPY/UNHAPPY' was given a rating by the researcher, who ensured that the whole range of the numbers one to five were used. The first element and the first construct were then read out by the researcher who asked the subjects, "Now, do you think that PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING, SPELLING HARD, as a group, are UNHAPPY or HAPPY? Remember, you've got to give them a mark out of five - one is unhappy, two is quite unhappy, three is a mixture or not sure, four is quite happy and five is happy. Choose the number you think describes how this group feels and write it in the first box". The whole process was repeated for each element and construct until the grid was completed. At the introduction of the construct the context in which the construct was viewed by the researcher's own students was reiterated to ensure respondents were aware of the meaning attached to the verbal label.

INSERT FIGURE 5 HERE

An example of a grid where constructs and elements were supplied.

	people who find reading writing spelling hard	people who find reading writing spelling comes easy	filling in forms, applying for jobs	as I used to be before classes	as I am now	as I would like to be	with strangers	at work	with my partner	with the children	FIGURE 5
unhappy	2	4	2	3	5	5	3	3			happy
lacking in confidence	1	4	4	2	4	5	2	2			confident
gives up	1	4	3	2	4	5	3.	3			sticks at things
useless	2	5	1	3	5	5	3	4			useful
limited	1	5	3	2	4	5	4	3			unlimited
worries	2	4	4	3	4	5	4	4			takes life as it comes
doesn't remember things	2	5	5	3	5	5	4	3			remembers things

Analysis of the hypotheses relevant to the grid for the second phase of the study.

Grids were analysed, as the first sample, using Shaw's FOCUS program. (For full details see Shaw 1980).

In order to clarify locus of control orientations in the second phase of the study Levenson's IPC Scale was administered. Full details of the scale are given in the relevant chapter discussing methodology.

Self report questions replaced the interviews in the second phase of the study. The question relevant to this section is the one which sought the respondent's attribution for his past literacy failure: 'What do you think the reasons were that you had difficulties with reading/writing/spelling?'. The replies were analysed according to Abramson's (1978) reformulation of Seligman's (1975) learned helplessness model. (Full details of how this analysis was applied are given earlier in this chapter as this question originated as part of the interview schedule and so was relevant to the first phase of the study).

Results and discussion of the second phase of the repertory grid study.

There are three hypotheses which need to be considered in the repertory grid section of this study. They are hypotheses 2A, 2D (part 1 and 2) and 2E (part 1 and 2).

Hypothesis 2A states that the distance between the respondent's ideal self and the self prior to tuition will be greater than that between the ideal self and the present self, as expressed on the repertory grid. In other words, respondents will view themselves less negatively after tuition than before. (All respondents having received at least one year's tuition).

This hypothesis was confirmed, 47 of the 49 respondents showing movement towards the ideal self. (Full details are given in the table in the appendix).

Hypothesis 2D, part 1, notes that there is a relationship between closeness to the ideal self on the repertory grid and the attribution for literacy failure given in the self report questions, those closest to their ideal self being more likely to externalize the reasons for their literacy failure.

Hypothesis 2D, part 2 states that those closest to their ideal self, as reported on the repertory grid, are more likely to be those who see themselves as having more control over their own life than either powerful others or /and chance on Levenson's IPC Scale.

This hypothesis was confirmed at the 5% significance level.

Hypothesis 2E, part 1, notes that those who internalize the reasons for their past literacy failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who see powerful others and/or chance as having control in their life, as measured by Levenson's IPC Scale.

This hypothesis was confirmed at the 5% level of significance. Although this hypothesis is not directly relevant to the grid it is useful to consider here as it clarifies the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2E, part 2, notes that those who internalize their reasons for literacy failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who on the repertory grid show no change towards the positive pole on one or more constructs when rating for the elements 'AS I AM NOW' and 'AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES'. In other words, they will show continuing negative perceptions of self. This hypothesis was confirmed at the 5% significance level.

The full statistical details for all the hypotheses in this study are given in a separate chapter.

Here, the hypotheses will be discussed in more general terms by juxtaposing relevant findings and considering them within the context of two individual grids which illustrate the findings from the hypotheses.

A grid exemplifying hypothesis 2A, and hypothesis 2D, parts one and two, will be considered first.

Confirmation of these hypotheses reveals the following picture. A respondent confirming these hypotheses views himself as having moved considerably nearer to the ideal self on the repertory grid since tuition commenced. This closeness to the ideal self is related to the attribution given for literacy failure on the self report questions. Those who are closest to their ideal self are more likely to blame their past literacy failure on forces outside themselves, such as the school they attended. If they do blame themselves the reasons are likely to be internal but unstable e.g. not trying rather than a stable attribution such as poor memory.

Such respondents are also more likely to see themselves as having more control in their own life than either chance and/or powerful others, as measured by Levenson's IPC Scale.

These respondents are deemed to be free of learned helplessness and therefore, to be able to progress towards their optimum learning potential.

A grid exemplifying those who followed this pattern (the majority of the sample) is student 4. (A copy of 4's grid is enclosed for clarification).

INSERT FIGURE 6 HERE

FIGURE 6

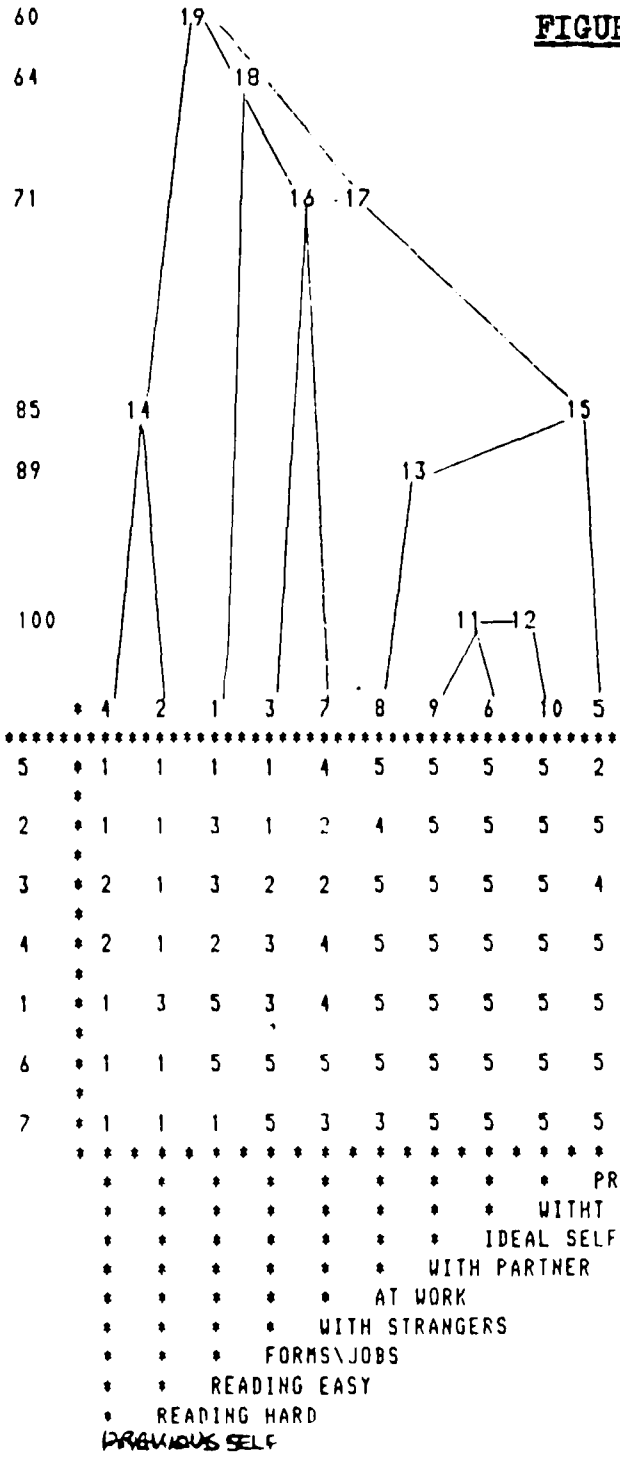
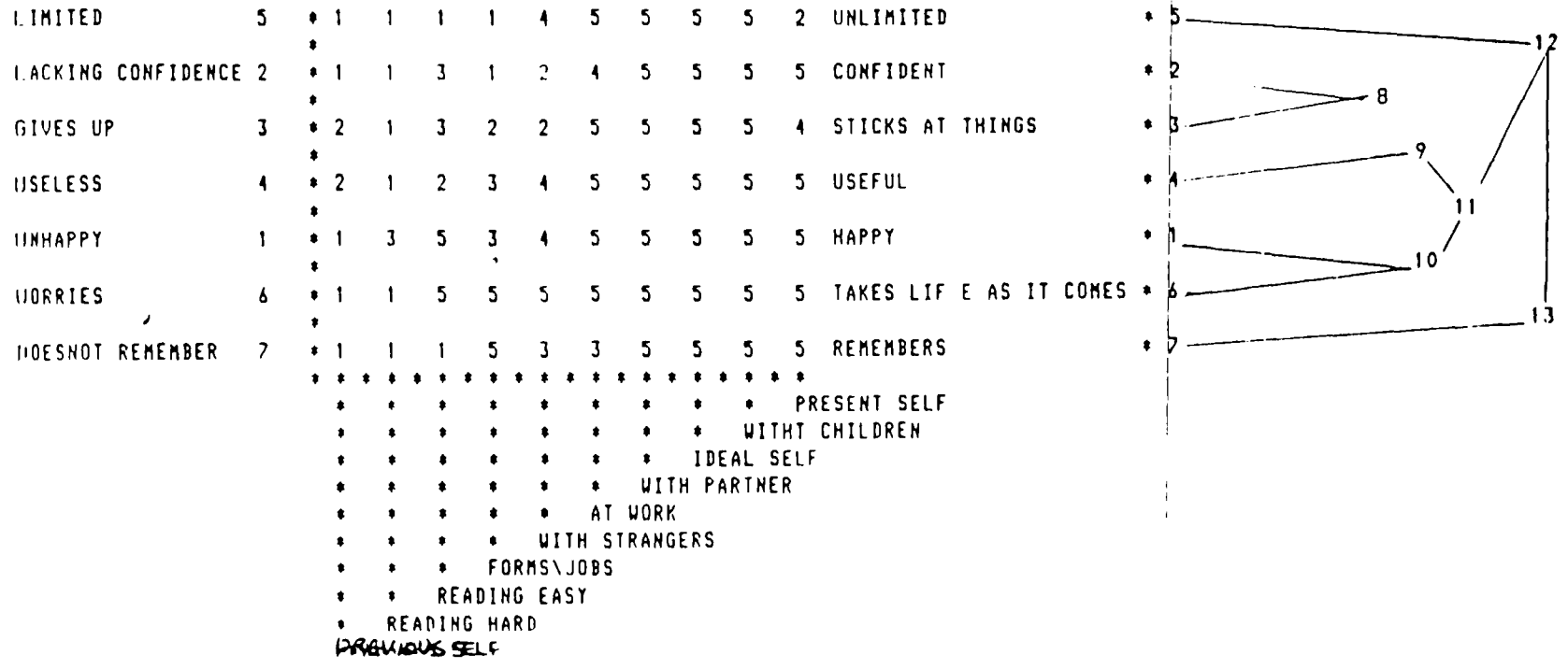


Fig. 6 shows a FOCUSed grid for student 4 from the second phase of the study (see fig. 4. p. 136 for an explanation of interpretation). A full explanation of fig. 6 appears in the text.



4 is a twenty-five year old male who has attended classes for just under two years. He has a close match (85%) between the present and ideal self. He is, incidentally one of those who has shown the largest shift towards the ideal, as will be seen from the table in the appendix. Neither of these factors is surprising since the respondent has externalized the reasons for his literacy failure, blaming the teacher's inability to control classes for his past literacy difficulties. He also sees the self as a more strongly controlling factor in his life (15) than either powerful others (6) or chance (2). (These figures are explained fully in the chapter discussing Levenson's IPC in detail). These attributions mean that low self esteem is unlikely to be perceived across situations, thus an improvement in literacy skills is able to facilitate a moving closer to the ideal self.

The previous self (AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES) is viewed towards the negative end of the pole on all constructs. The most dramatic shifts have been made on feelings of confidence, usefulness, happiness, ability to remember things and take life as it comes, where 4 now matches his ideal self. He is towards the positive end of the pole on ability to stick at things. Although there has been a slight shift on the construct LIMITED/ UNLIMITED 4 still views himself towards the negative end of the pole. In explanation 4 stated that money placed most limitation in his life, "Don't matter how good a reader you are if you haven't got money you're limited what you can do".

This grid shows a clustering of the elements 'ME AS I AM NOW', ME AT WORK, WITH MY PARTNER, WITH THE CHILDREN and THE IDEAL SELF. The latter three have 100% match, viewed positively on all constructs.

'ME AT WORK' joins these at 89% similarity viewed towards the positive end of the pole on all constructs, except the ability to remember, which is viewed with uncertainty in this situation.

The element 'APPLYING FOR JOBS/FILLING IN FORMS' is rated positively on the two constructs 'TAKES LIFE AS IT COMES' and 'REMEMBERS THINGS'. The other ratings conform to the expected negative pattern expressed towards this element in most grids. There is a lack of confidence and a tendency to give up rather than stick at things and ambiguity is expressed about feelings of happiness and usefulness. The group of PEOPLE WHO FIND READING, WRITING AND SPELLING EASY, match the above at 64%. While viewing this group as HAPPY and ABLE TO TAKE LIFE AS IT COMES they are seen negatively on feelings of limitation and usefulness. The respondent's attitude to limitation has already been discussed. His comments on the construct USEFUL/USELESS were that everyone is useless at something. "Somebody might be the best reader in the world but then his car breaks down - he's useless, hasn't got a clue".

4 rated this group negatively on ability to REMEMBER THINGS and matched them with the group who FIND READING, WRITING, SPELLING HARD. Most respondents record a wide discrepancy between the two groups. 4 noted that (for him) remembering was not necessarily a major factor in literacy achievement. He comments "The wife's a good reader and she's hopeless at remembering things!" Thus, it can be seen that the respondent has a non idealistic appraisal of the group finding literacy skills easy.

It has already been noted that 4's increase in self esteem (which confirms hypothesis 2A) has been facilitated by his external attributions of failure and his internal locus of control orientation, thus confirming hypothesis 2D, parts 1 and 2. As already noted, such orientations suggest the

respondent is free of learned helplessness and, therefore, able to progress towards optimum cognitive and motivational development which would not be feasible if learned helplessness were present.

Next a grid exemplifying those confirming hypothesis 2E, part 1 and 2 will be considered.

Such respondents, if they have moved towards their ideal self will still be considerably distanced from the ideal. The distance from the ideal self is related to the attribution given for past literacy failure on the self report questions. These respondents are more likely to blame themselves for their past literacy failure, giving internal, stable, global attributions (e.g. slow learner) which are likely to affect self esteem because of their pervasive nature. Such respondents are likely to show continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid.

These respondents are deemed to be showing continued learned helplessness. They are, therefore, being impeded in progressing towards their full learning potential. (Strategies which may be adopted to help such students are considered in detail in the final chapter).

Although these students formed a minority in this sample it is considered important that such students are recognized and helped since unless they are helped to overcome learned helplessness they remain impeded from reaching their full cognitive and motivational development.

A grid exemplifying those showing continued learned helplessness is student 10. (see copy of grid 10 enclosed).

INSERT FIGURE 7 HERE

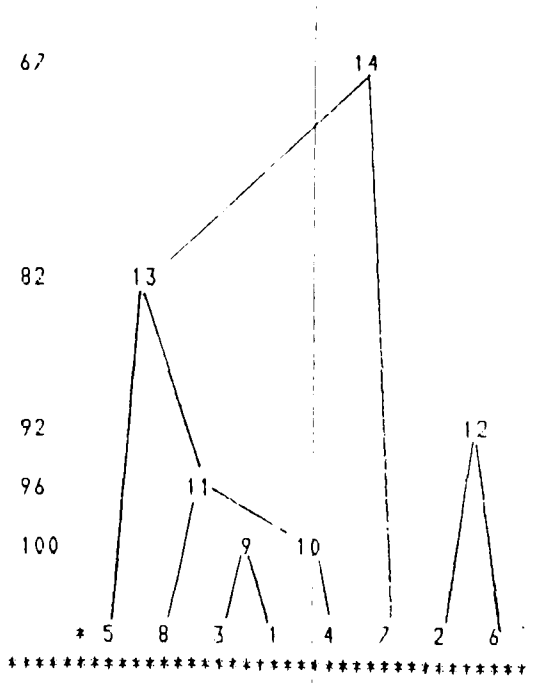
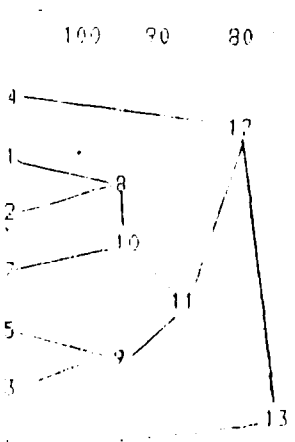


FIGURE 7

A FOCUSed grid for student 10 from the second phase of the study. A full explanation of this grid appears in the text (see fig. 4 p. 136 for an explanation of interpretation).



USELESS	4	*	3	2	1	1	1	3	5	5	USEFUL
UNHAPPY	1	*	3	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	HAPPY
LACKING CONFIDENCE	2	*	2	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	CONFIDENT
DOESNOT REMEMBER	7	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	REMEMBERS
LIMITED	5	*	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	5	UNLIMITED
GIVES UP	3	*	1	1	1	1	1	4	5	5	STICKS AT THINGS
WORRIES	6	*	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	5	TAKES LIFE AS IT COMES

IDEAL SELF
READING EASY
WITH STRANGERS
PREVIOUS SELF
READING HARD
FORMS JOBS
WITH MY PARTNER
PRESENT SELF

10 is a forty-four year old female who has attended classes for the past sixteen months. This respondent's grid has the lowest % match between the ideal and present self in the whole sample. The match is 21%. This low match is reflected by the respondent's internal, stable, global attributions which will affect self esteem across situation. In the self report questions, in answer to the inquiry about literacy failure 10 replied, "I've got a bad memory so it wouldn't sink in".

On Levenson's IPC Scale the category 'powerful others' is seen as the most dominant influence, (39). This is followed by chance (32) the self is envisaged as having less control than either of these (26). These results confirm hypothesis 2E, part 1 and 2.

The pervasive nature of the student's negative feelings regarding her poor memory seem confirmed by her rating 93% similarity between the constructs 'DOESN'T REMEMBER THINGS', 'LACKING IN CONFIDENCE' and'UPHAPPY.' The whole grid is tightly construed. There is a further 93% match between 'FEELING LIMITED' and 'GIVING UP' rather than 'STICKING AT THINGS' and all five constructs match at 87%.

Not surprisingly on a grid which is so far from the ideal self,- almost all the ratings, (except those given for the IDEAL SELF) express either negativeness, or at best ambiguity or uncertainty. This grid reveals continuing negative perceptions of self on several constructs.

The previous self is rated at the most negative end of the pole on all constructs and these perceptions persist on the constructs 'GIVES UP', 'DOESN'T REMEMBER' and 'FEELS LIMITED'. The present self continues towards the negative end of the pole in lacking confidence and in WORRYING rather than TAKING LIFE AS IT COMES, while uncertainty is expressed about

feelings of uselessness and happiness. Clustering together at 100% similarity match are the previous self, the group who find reading, writing and spelling hard and situations involving form filling. All are viewed negatively on all constructs. 'ME WITH MY PARTNER' joins these at 96% similarity match. This latter finding is interesting as interviews with the initial sample showed the importance of a positive relationship with the partner in ensuring sustained effort in trying to eradicate literacy difficulties.

The subject identifies a 92% match between ideal self and PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRIRING/SPELLING EASY. Both of these, understandably, being rated positively on all constructs, except that the group finding reading easy are viewed with ambiguity on the construct 'WORRIES/TAKES LIFE AS IT COMES'.

In summary, this grid reveals an overall negative picture with continuing negative perceptions of self (showing low self esteem is likely to be perceived across situations). Attributions for literacy failure are internal and stable. There is a view that powerful others and chance are more relevant than the self in controlling life circumstances (and, interestingly, a high neuroticism score of 19). These findings confirm the researcher's hypotheses and it does not seem surprising that the student is so distanced from her ideal self. All the above factors need to be viewed within the framework of the respondent's perceived improvement in her literacy skills.

This respondent's internal, stable attributions and continuing negative perceptions of self on the grid suggest she may be suffering from a continuing sense of learned helplessness which, despite her perceived improvement in literacy skills, impedes her reaching optimum learning

potential. For this student and others like her it is hypothesised that certain contingencies should be borne in mind by literacy tutors.
For these respondents an improvement in literacy skills is not enough to free them from a sense of learned helplessness and, therefore, give them a chance to reach full motivational potential. In order for this type of student to show a meaningful increase in self esteem it is hypothesized that certain contingencies, most particularly teaching a student to handle failure, need to be borne in mind by literacy tutors so that such students have a chance of reaching their full potential. (These notions are discussed more fully in a later chapter).

Possible role of the grid in learned helplessness research

The confirmation of hypothesis E, part 2, that those respondents who internalise the reasons for past literacy failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who, on the repertory grid, show continuing negative perceptions of self, suggests that the repertory grid may be a further, useful methodology in studies of learned helplessness.

The attribution given and the locus of control orientation suggest, according to Abramson and Seligman's hypothesis (1978), that these respondents are experiencing learned helplessness. The researcher's findings and confirmation of the hypothesis thst these correlate with negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid suggest that the repertory grid may be a useful additional technology for elucidating learned helplessness. As has been explained elsewhere Abramson and Seligman note that definition of helplessness is complex and new methodologies are needed. The possible role for the repertory grid should be further explored in this area.

Summary

Since respondents experiencing helplessness are impeded from reaching full potential in the affective domain, learning is adversely affected. In other words, for some students with literacy difficulties it is not enough that their skill in literacy improves to ensure they begin to move towards optimum development and, therefore, to achieve the maximum learning potential. Before they can do this they have to be freed from a sense of helplessness and skills improvement alone, is for them, not enough to ensure this occurs. This finding has implications for adult literacy tutors and these will be considered shortly.

This study has used the available data to specify attributions but as Abramson, Garber and Seligman (1980) note, " ... verbal reports are only one of a number of potential converging measures for assessing attributions" (p. 19) and an important future task will be, "to develop an adequate technology for measuring attribution expectations". (p. 19, op.cit). Repertory grids may be an additional relevant technology in this developing area.

Respondents' response to grid elicitation

The elicitation of the grid was seen by respondents as a pleasant experience. This may have been partly due to their awareness that they were acknowledged experts. As Pope and Keen (1981) note, "psychology based on personal construct theory offers a new relationship with education - one in which the views of those actually involved in the educational process are paramount and not subordinate to the elegance of experimental design". (p. 24). The relevance the subjects seemed to find

in the elements and constructs seemed a reassuring factor to them. The grid was an excellent way to begin the data collection. In the feedback afterwards although some students complained about some other tasks required of them (notably the language in Levenson's IPC discussed elsewhere) no-one complained about the grid. Indeed, many were positive in its praise saying how much they 'enjoyed filling it in'. This says a lot for the grid, carefully presented, as a tool for research, even for those respondents who do not normally find much pleasure or relaxation in handling the written word.

CHAPTER SIX Statistical Analyses

The statistical details for the hypotheses from both the first and second phase of the study are given in this chapter. These will be dealt with in chronological order and laid out in the conventional style beginning with the null hypothesis (hereafter referred to an H.O.). This is followed by the alternative hypothesis (hereafter referred to as H.1.). Next comes the statistical test, followed by significance level, then sampling distribution, critical region and result.

Where necessary for clarification a brief discussion of the methodology adopted will be given, but a full discussion of the results is given in the appropriate chapter of the study.

First phase of the study

Hypothesis 1A

H.O.

There will be as many respondents moving away from as towards the ideal self (as shown by the present self of the repertory grid). In other words, of those showing any movement, between previous self and present self, the probability of anyone moving towards the ideal self equals the probability of anyone moving away from the ideal self on the repertory grid.

H.1.

The distance between the respondents' ideal self and the self prior to tuition will be greater than that between the ideal self and the present self on the repertory grid. I.e. respondents will view themselves less negatively after tuition than before, as expressed on the repertory grid.

N.B. All respondents will have received at least one year's tuition.

Statistical test

Binomial probability as there are two outcomes (after removing stationary respondents c.f. sign test) - moving towards and moving away.

Significance level

5 % i.e. $\alpha = .05$ one tailed

Sampling distribution

Bi nomial with N = 10

Critical region

Number of respondents moving towards the ideal self > 8

Result

On the null hypothesis that the probability of moving nearer the ideal self is the same as not doing so (i.e. $p = .5$) the result obtained of 9 moving nearer the ideal self is significant at the 5% level.

Hypothesis 1B

H.0.

There will be no difference in neuroticism, as measured by Eysenck's Personality Inventory, between the researcher's sample and the normal population as established by Eysenck.

H.1.

The researcher's sample will score more highly on neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, than the normal population as established by Eysenck.

Statistical test

The t- test, as it is the difference between sample means.

Significance level

5% i.e. α = .05, one tailed.

Sampling distribution

students t distribution with 2008 degrees of freedom.

Critical region

Greater than 1.645 standard errors of difference between the means in the direction indicated by H.1. (student's t distribution with 2008 degrees of freedom is approximately the normal distribution).

Result

	NEUROTICISM SCORE	
	Eysenck	Clark
sample size	2000	10
mean	9.065	13.000
standard deviation	4.783	4.560

On the null hypothesis that both samples are from the same population a pooled estimate of the population variance is 4.784. So a best estimate for the standard error of the difference between the means of the two samples is 1.517. The difference between the means is 3.935 i.e. 2.594 standard errors in the direction indicated by H.1.

The hypothesis is thus confirmed at the 5% level (one tailed significance).

Hypothesis 1C

H.O.

There will be no correlation between the degree of neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, and the distance between the present and ideal self elicited by the repertory grid.

H.1

The degree of neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, will correlate positively with the distance between the present self and the ideal self elicited by the répertory grid; those scoring highest on neuroticism being furthest away from their ideal self.

Statistical test

Product moment correlation co-efficient as it can be assumed interval scales are being dealt with.

Significance level

5% i.e. α = .05, one tailed.

Sampling distribution

Z transformation ($Z = 1.15 \log_{10} \frac{1 + r}{1 - r}$)

on correlation co-efficient yielding normal distribution.

Critical region

Greater than 1.645 standard errors of Z in the direction indicated by H.1.

Result

r_{NK} = .807 (N = neuroticism. K = distance between the present and ideal self). Using the Z transformation Z = 1.126. The standard error of Z is

$$0.378 \quad \text{i.e.} \sqrt{\frac{1}{10 - 3}} \Bigg)$$

With the null hypothesis that there is really no correlation, 1.126 is 2.979 standard errors from zero.

This result is significant at the 5% level, one tailed.

Hypothesis 1D

H.0.

There is no relationship between continuing negative perceptions of self in the repertory grid and the attribution for failure given in the interviews.

H.1.

Those respondents who give continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid are likely to be those who, in the interviews, perceive the cause for their past literacy failure to have an internal locus of control orientation.

Statistical test

Hypergeometric - as very small frequencies are involved. As categorical variables are involved here the t-test and the other similar parametric tests cannot be used. Chi-square cannot be used because of the low cellular frequencies. The hypergeometric is the table equivalent of the bi-nomial so is a suitable test. (See Mostseller, G. et al, 'Probability with Statistical Applications'. Addison Wesley 1972 for full details).

Significance level

5% i.e. $\alpha = .05$, one tailed

Sampling distribution

Hypergeometric.

Critical region

The sample is too small to allow the 5% level to be applied, i.e. critical region is when the number of respondents who both internalize their reasons for literacy failure and who have continuing negative perceptions of self is < 0, which is impossible.

Result

Not testable because of the lack of a suitable test.

Hypotheses for the second phase of the study.

As has been explained elsewhere some changes and additions were made in the hypotheses for the second phase of the sample. The methodologies for both samples have been discussed elsewhere (in the chapters describing the interviews, the repertory grid and Eysenck's Personality Inventory) as well as in the introductory chapter.

The hypotheses for the second phase of the study are as follows.

Hypothesis 2A

H.O.

There will be as many respondents moving away from as towards the ideal self, as shown by the present self on the repertory grid. In other words, of those showing any movement between previous self and present self the probability of anyone moving towards the ideal self equals the probability of anyone moving away from the ideal self on the repertory grid.

H.1.

The distance between the respondent's ideal self and the self prior to tuition will be greater than that between the ideal self and the present self on the repertory grid. I.e. respondents will view themselves less

negatively after tuition than before as expressed on the repertory grid.

N.B. All respondents will have received at least one year's tuition.

Statistical test

Binomial probability as there are two outcomes (after removing stationary respondents c.f. sign test) moving towards and moving away.

Significance test

5% i.e. α = .05, one tailed

Sampling distribution

Binomial with N=47 (i.e. 2 showed no movement) and p=.5

Critical region

Number of respondents moving towards the ideal self $>$ 29

Result

On the null hypothesis that the probability of moving nearer the ideal self is the same as not doing so (i.e. p=.5) the result obtained of 47 moving nearer the ideal self is significant at the 5% level.

Hypothesis 2B

H.O.

There will be no difference in neuroticism as measured by Eysenck's Personality Inventory, between the researcher's sample and the normal population as established by Eysenck.

H.1.

The researcher's sample will soore more highly on neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, than the normal population as established by Eysenck.

Statistical test

The t- test as it is the difference between sample means.

Significance level

5%, one tailed.

Sampling distribution

Student's t distribution with 2047 degrees of freedom.

Critical region

Greater than 1.645 standard errors of difference between the means in the direction indicated by H.1. (Student's t distribution with 2047 degrees of freedom is approximately the normal distribution).

Result

	NEUROTICISM SCORE	
	Eysenck	Clark
sample size	2000	49
mean	9.065	12.408
standard deviation	4.783	5.391

On the null hypothesis that both samples are from the same population, a pooled estimate of the population variance is 4.801. So a best estimate for the standard error of the difference between the means of the two samples is .694. The difference between the means is 3.343, i.e. 4.817 standard errors in the direction indicated by H.1.

The hypothesis is thus confirmed at the 5% level, one tailed significance.

Hypothesis 2C

H.0.

There will be no correlation between the degree of neuroticism, as

measured by the EPI, and the distance between the present self and the ideal self elicited by the repertory grid.

H.1.

The degree of neuroticism, as measured by the EPI, will correlate positively with the distance between the present self and the ideal self elicited by the repertory grid, those scoring highest on neuroticism being furthest away from their ideal self.

Statistical test

Product-moment correlation co-efficient as it can be assumed interval scales are being dealt with.

Significance level

5%, i.e. $\alpha = .05$, one tailed.

Sampling distribution

Z transformation $\left(Z = 1.15 \log_{10} \frac{1+r}{1-r}\right)$

on correlation co-efficient, yielding normal distribution.

Critical region

1.645 standard errors of Z in the direction indicated by H.1.

Result

$\uparrow$ NK = .536 (N = neuroticism. K = distance between the present self and the ideal self).

Using the Z transformation Z = .598.

The standard error of Z is .147 i.e. $\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{49 - 3}}\right)$

With the null hypothesis that there is really no correlation .598 is 4.068 standard errors from zero.

This result is significant at the 5% level, one tailed.

Hypothesis 2D, part 1

H.0.

There is no relationship between closeness to the ideal self as measured by the repertory grid, and the attribution given for failure on the self report questions.

H.1.

There is a relationship between closeness to the ideal self, as measured by the repertory grid, and the attribution for literacy failure given on the self report questions. Those closest to the ideal self being more likely to externalize the reasons for their literary failure.

Statistical test

Mann-Whitney U Test since it is desired to avoid the assumptions of the parametric counterpart.[1]

Significance level

5% i.e. α = .05, one tailed

Sampling distribution

Mann-Whitney U with N_1 (those classed as external)=12 and N_2 (those classed as internal or mixed) = 37.

For these figures U can be assumed to be normally distributed with mean $\frac{1}{2}N_1N_2$ and variance $\frac{1}{12} N_1 N_2 (N_1+N_2+1)$

Critical region

$U \leq 151.2$ for the direction indicated by H.1.

---

(1) **The method of generating the closeness to the ideal self is likely to produce a sampling distribution of the difference between the means that is not normal.**

Result

U has a value of 136 and so is significant at the 5% level.

Hypothesis 2D, part 2

H.0.

There is no relationship between closeness to the ideal self, as reported on the repertory grid, and seeing oneself as having more control over one's life (Internality) than either Powerful Others or Chance on Levenson's IPC Scale.

H.1.

Those closest to their ideal self, as reported on the repertory grid, are more likely to be those who see themselves as having more control over their own life than either Powerful Others or Chance on Levenson's IPC Scale.

Statistical test

Product moment correlation since it can be assumed interval scales are being dealt with.

Significance level

5%, i.e. $\alpha = .05$, one tailed.

Sampling distribution

Z transformation on correlation co-efficient yielding normal distribution.

Critical region

Greater than 1.645 standard errors of Z in the direction indicated by H.1.

Result

Here a correlation co-efficient can be found. It would not be correct to take raw I (Internality) scores as these give no indication of which mode, I, P (powerful others) or C (chance) is dominant. For example, subject 52 has an I score of 38, but a P score of 40. Whereas subject 4 has an I score of 15, but a P and C scores of 6 and 2.

There are several measures which could be constructed. The one chosen here is based on the algebraic difference between the I score and the higher of the other two (P or C). To make the measure positive 20 is added. Thus, the measure for subject 52 is 18 (i.e. 38-40+20) and for subject 4 is 29 (i.e. 15-6+20).

When this measure (called here R) is correlated with the match between the ideal self and the present self, the following correlation co-efficient is obtained: $r_{KR} = .337$

Using the Z transformation we have $Z = .350$

Using the value of .147 which is the standard error for Z, we have, with the null hypothesis that the correlation is really zero, a value of 2.381 standard errors from zero.

This is significant at the 5% level, since it is one tailed here.

Hypothesis 2E, part 1.

H.O.

There will be no relationship between attribution given for failure on the self report questions and the variable R derived from scores on Levenson's IPC scale (as defined in hypothesis D, part 2).

H.1.

Those who internalize their reasons for failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who see Powerful Others and/or Chance as having control in their life, as measured by Levenson's IPC Scale. (R, as above).

Statistical test

t test on the difference between the means of R for those who internalize and those who do not.

Significance level

5%, $\alpha = .05$, one tailed.

Sampling distribution

Student's t with 47 degrees of freedom.

Critical region

$t > 1.678$

Result

The standard error of the distance between the means is 4.056 The actual difference between the two means is 6.86 which is 1.691 times the standard error.

This is significant at the 5% level.

Hypothesis 2E, Part 2

H.0.

There will be no relationship between the attribution for failure given on the self report questions and the changes shown in the repertory grid on any constructs as applied to the elements 'AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES' and 'AS I AM NOW'.

H.1.

Those who internalize their reasons for literacy failure on the self report questions are likely to be those who show no change towards the positive pole on one or more constructs between the elements 'AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES' and 'AS I AM NOW' on the repertory grid. i.e. They will have continuing negative perceptions of self.

N.B. Positive means more desirable to the respondent.

Statistical test

Hypergeometric test as categorial variables are involved here and cellular frequencies are too small for chi-square.

Significance level

5% i.e. $\alpha = .05$, one tailed.

Sampling distribution

Hypergeometric with m=30, r=7 and n=49 as defined in the table below.

	continuing negative perceptions		totals
	No	Yes	
internal stable	1(x)	6(r-x)	7(r)
other	29(m-x)	13(n-m-r+x)	42(n-r)
totals	30(m)	19(n-m)	49(n)

Critical region

$x < 2$ (for the direction indicated by H.1.)

Result

Since x is actually 1, the result is significant at the 5% level.

CHAPTER SEVEN Results and implications of findings.

This final chapter summarizes all the findings from the study, as well as discussing the results of the hypotheses.

The implications of these results for adult literacy tutors are examined, and suggestions for further research are outlined.

Summary of the findings

General findings

The perceptions of self and general information expressed by respondents during interviews in the initial phase of the study were as follows.

The majority of the sample had heard of the literacy scheme through the media. Those with a partner had received encouragement from them to seek literacy tuition. In a partnership, receiving positive support seemed to be a factor in their continued attendance at classes. There were two major reasons given for attending classes. One referred to the respondent's work. This could be a change of job, redundancy, or being offered more responsibility at work. The second reason given was that seeing the television programmes ('On the Move' or news programmes covering the literacy campaign), had encouraged the respondents to seek help with their literacy difficulties. All the respondents considered that their literacy had improved since attending literacy classes: a few thought this improvement had changed their life. Two respondents reported they were now in a job with which they would have previously been unable to cope.

Many said that they now read more, but with one exception this did not refer to novel reading. Most read only reference books on subjects such

as gardening, and then only very occasionally. Most of the increased reading referred to was of magazines and newspapers. The majority took a daily paper, but for most of the sample the paper had previously been in the house, although they had not read it. One respondent changed the paper he read (from the Sun to the Daily Mail) saying his original reason for choosing the Sun was that it was easy to read. None read the "quality" newspapers (except one respondent who claimed he read the Sunday Times from cover to cover, spending the whole of Sunday so doing).

Some other studies (e.g. Gazin 1980) have reported disrupted schooling and frequent truancy among adults with literacy difficulties. In this sample, with one noticeable exception who began school at eleven, all respondents had attended school regularly. As in Charnley's sample (1978) the majority became aware they had a literacy problem fairly early in their school career - while they were still at junior school. Just about half had been offered positive help by the school with their literacy problems. The majority of the sample had other siblings or relatives who had experienced literacy difficulties. However, the cyclical pattern often associated with literacy problems did not seem to be reflected in the attitude most respondents displayed towards their own children; this may be because none of the respondent's spouses experienced literacy difficulties.

Just over half the sample stated that they hoped to gain confidence, as well as improve their skills, as a result of enrolling for literacy tuition. This perhaps indicates an expectation of receiving an education rather than only skills training.

This thesis, where feasible during the interview phase of the study, built on the work of Charnley (1978).

This writer shares some of Charnley's perceptions of adult education, particularly his notion that a person's sense of personal worth is paramount and that the literacy scheme should embody the concept of adult education as 'a healing process' (p. 178, 1979). However, Charnley's choice of the Ethological methodology has meant that no attempt was made to impose a framework which allowed for rigorous analysis. This is probably a deliberate function of the methodology chosen. While it has the advantage of allowing the students' perceptions from the interview transcripts to be expressed, it has a disadvantage. To use a doctor/patient analogy, it is as if the doctor accepted only the patient's diagnosis of his disease, instead of taking note of the patient's account but also applying his own professional knowledge to an assimilation of his own and the patent's judgments.

Charnley made no suggestions for future areas of research. Therefore, except for certain areas in the interview schedule, this study has charted new ground in the field of adult literacy research.

This study, by examining the respondents' perceptions of self and applying the learned helplessness model as a theoretical framework has aimed to suggest ways in which a contribution can be made to the 'healing process' which should be part of adult education.

It was not practicable to repeat the interviews at the second stage of the study, but the repertory grid had been designed so that some other useful information, as well as perceptions of previous, present and ideal self, could emerge at this stage of the study. The elements 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING HARD' and 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING COMES EASY' were included to see if respondents polarized the

two groups. It was felt that if this was the case it may indicate an unrealistic appraisal of those with and without literacy difficulties. It was also considered useful to see how closely the sample identified with the group who experienced literacy difficulties, as this could help identify why they came forward for assistance.

Only eleven grids out of a total of forty-nine showed polarization (only rating 1s or 5s), suggesting that most respondents construed the groups in a realistic way.

While most respondents viewed themselves negatively on the element 'AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES' and saw themselves resembling the group 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING HARD', the identification was not uniformly close. However, it is only possible to speculate whether this was a factor in their coming forward for tuition.

Most respondents identified a close match between the ideal self and 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING COMES EASY'.

The element 'ME WITH STRANGERS' was included to try to establish how the respondents felt in their day to day encounters with people who were neither work mates, friends, family or acquaintances. No clear pattern emerged.

The relationship with the family was divided into two separate elements. 'ME WITH MY PARTNER', 'ME WITH THE CHILDREN'. The reason for this, as stated earlier, was because during the interviews it became clear that some respondents were inhibited by the thought of their children discovering their literacy difficulties. An extreme anecdotal example of this is one of the researcher's students who refused to bring any books to class, as he told the children he was going to play darts for the evening.

In the second sample of forty-nine, twenty-nine respondents did not have children. Those who did tended to give positive ratings for this element, but those with older children included more negative ratings. This may be due to factors other than fear of the children discovering the parents literacy difficulties. Such possible reasons were not probed as they are outside the scope of this study.

Seventeen respondents did not have partners. Those for whom this element was relevant gave generally positive ratings. There were only three exceptions to this. Grids three and ten gave only negative ratings and grid sixteen rated only 3s.

These high ratings are perhaps surprising, but it may reflect the pattern which emerged from the interviews. This showed that respondents had received positive encouragement from their partner; this may be an indication of a generally positive relationship.

The element 'ME AT WORK' was given a variable rating by respondents. Thirty-one respondents included positive ratings (4s or 5s) and only one grid (15) elicited only negative ratings.

The element on the grid which received the most consistently negative ratings from all respondents was 'FILLING IN FORMS/APPLYING FOR JOBS'. Where any positive ratings were given they tended to be for the construct 'STICKS AT THINGS/GIVES UP' or 'REMEMBERS THINGS/DOES NOT REMEMBER THINGS'. These situations are demanding of literacy skills so this negative finding is unsurprising. Further findings relevant to the grid will be considered with the hypotheses.

Results of the hypotheses

All the hypotheses (except hypothesis 1D in the initial phase of the study) were confirmed at the five per cent level of significance.

Thus, it was shown that those adults with literacy difficulties who were respondents in this study rated the present self more positively than they rated 'ME AS I USED TO BE BEFORE CLASSES', as expressed on the Kelly Repertory Grid.

They were also more neurotic than the normal population, as established by Eysenck.

This neuroticism was found to be associated to the distance between the present self and the ideal self on the repertory grid, those nearest their ideal self having lower neuroticism scores than those furthest away. An association was also established between the closeness to the ideal self on the repertory grid and the attribution for literacy failure given on the self report questions, those closest to their ideal self being more likely to externalize the reasons for their literacy failure.

As well as externalizing the reasons for their literacy failure, those closest to the ideal self on the repertory grid also saw themselves as having more control over their own life than either chance or powerful others on Levenson's IPC Scale.

Conversely, those who blamed themselves for their literacy failure on the self report questions saw themselves as having less control over their own life than either chance and/or powerful others on Levenson's IPC Scale. They also showed contrasting negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid. As the links between attribution and learned helplessness

are already established (e.g. Lefcourt 1980) this additional link (using the repertory grid) has implications for the future direction in which the grid may be a valid research tool in locus of control studies.

The need for additional technologies in locus of control studies has been fully discussed elsewhere in this study. Further research should be conducted using the repertory grid (containing the elements, past, present and ideal self) in locus of control studies to further examine the possible usefulness of the repertory grid in this developing area.

Those students who viewed themselves as more in control of their lives than either powerful others and/or chance on Levenson's IPC Scale, tended to attribute reasons for past literacy failure externally, viewed the present self on the repertory grid as closer to the ideal self than the previous self, showed less neuroticism on Eysenck's P.I. and less continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid, were seen as not likely to be impeded in their literacy progress by learned helplessness. This means they are more likely to be able to reach their full cognitive and motivational potential. These students formed the majority in this sample.

However, some students, despite a perceived improvement in their literacy skills, were deemed by the researcher to show learned helplessness. (See grid chapter for details). These students viewed their lives as controlled more by powerful others and/or chance than by the self. They tended to be those who showed continuing negative perceptions of self on the repertory grid. They were more distanced from their ideal self and showed higher neuroticism scores. These respondents tended to be those who blamed themselves for their past literacy failure. This attribution tended to be internal, stable and global, suggesting that low self esteem would be perceived across situations.

Previously established links between locus of control and learned helplessness (Lefcourt 1980) suggest that those respondents are experiencing learned helplessness.

Studies of learned helplessness have identified the importance of attribution for failure (Dweck 1975, Abramson et al 1978). It has also been shown that those students experiencing learned helplessness are also likely (because they perceive themselves as not in control of the situation) to show a lack of persistence, passivity and anxiety (Klein and Seligman 1976, Roth and Bootzin 1974, Thornton and Jacobs 1971). These traits inhibit efficient learning. Therefore, the finding that some respondents, while perceiving an improvement in their literacy skills, continue to experience learned helplessness, has implications for their literacy tutors. If, for some respondents, an improvement in literacy skills is not enough to free them from learned helplessness then tutors will have to adopt other strategies to assist their students in alleviating this learned helplessness, so that such a respondent may progress towards full cognitive and motivational development. Before considering ways in which this may be achieved, possible additions which could have been made to the present study will be discussed.

Perhaps it should be mentioned here that although this dissertation has chosen to focus on the perceptions of self in adults with literacy difficulties, it is recognised that these perceptions are not the only consideration in the literacy process. There are many others (e.g. the organisation of the education system, social factors, the structure of society etc.). Because they are not the focus of this study and are, therefore, not mentioned is not to say that they are not considered important.

An obvious addition to this study would have been to find a satisfactory method of checking the literacy progress of the students - perhaps by consulting their tutors. The researcher was reluctant to do this as it seemed an intrusion, and would also be time consuming of the tutor's time. Since attempts to apply formal reading tests had caused such stress in Charnley's study this researcher was reluctant to consider their use. The fact that they are designed for children and/or teenagers and are, therefore, not necessarily suitable for adults was a further consideration; time was another. Nevertheless, such information as they yield would have been useful in the study.

The eliciting of elements and constructs from the respondents for the repertory grids is a further technique which could have yielded more detailed perceptions of self. However, the time factor ensured this was not possible.

The study would have benefitted from a larger sample because, even with a second sample size of forty-nine, the number of respondents giving internal, stable, global attributions (one-seventh of the total sample) was small. Clearer perceptions of this group could have emerged from a larger sample. The smallness of the numbers attributing their literacy failure to an internal, stable, global cause could not become fully apparent until the data was being analysed. At the field work stage it seemed reasonable to assume the sample was of an adequate size. Pragmatically, for one researcher working alone, it would have been difficult to increase the sample size to a meaningful degree.

Strategies for tutors to adopt in assisting students with learned helplessness.

Identifying helplessness

Before those experiencing learned helplessness can be assisted to overcome this, practical ways of identifying need in those who have come forward for tuition will have to be found.

1) One possibility is the screening of respondents upon entry to a literacy scheme. For this, locus of control and grid methodology adopted in this study, could be applied. However, these methods may be considered too time consuming and demanding to present at an early stage in the respondents' experience of a literacy scheme.

2) A less time consuming method could be, where screening processes exist, to ensure that a self report question concerning the attribution given for past literacy failure is included. Those who give internal, stable, global, attributions for failure could then receive special tuition which attempts to redefine these attributions. Methods by which this may be accomplished are considered later in the chapter.

The disadvantage of this selection procedure may be that the student could distort the attribution in such circumstances (e.g. they may feel too inhibited to 'blame' the school if the interview is being conducted in a school), or they may feel it is a test of some kind and, therefore, distort their 'true' answer.

3) A further possibility is that the tutor could be trained to make the diagnosis of learned helplessness when they get to know their student. This could be accomplished by the tutor paying careful attention to the behaviour of their student when confronted with a learning failure situation. If the student responds to difficulties with remarks such as

'I'm no good at learning', 'I'm stupid', 'I always make a mess of things' etc., the tutor can recognize internal, stable, global attributions, indicating learned helplessness.

4) If the student is passive, lacks persistence and is inclined to be anxious, these can be taken as further possible indications of helplessness.

5) The manner in which success is handled is a further indication of learned helplessness. For example, the student is unlikely to be willing to accept the credit for a job well done. If praised by the tutor he/she is likely to attribute success externally. For example, the student will reject the praise by using phrases such as 'I just got lucky', or 'Any kid could do this sort of work anyway'.

N.B. In order for such data to emerge freely from the respondent the tutor will also have to be trained, as counsellors are, to monitor his own responses in situations. For example, many tutors may feel threatened by certain responses a student makes in a failure or success situation. They may, therefore, tend to manipulate their student to respond in a certain way.

In order to avoid this happening tutors would need to learn 'neutralizing' techniques for their own reactions so that the student is given the opportunity for as free a response as possible.

If tutors are trained to recognise the signs of learned helplessness, steps may then be taken to alleviate this.

How this may be accomplished will now be considered.

Alleviating learned helplessness

As well as the work by Dweck referred to earlier, work by Abramson, Garber and Seligman (1980) has isolated four ways in which learned helplessness may be alleviated in individuals. The therapeutic interventions they suggest have been translated by the researcher into teaching models.

1) One of their suggested interventions is identical to Dweck's notion of attribution reformulation.

Dweck's study (1975) divided children with learned helplessness into two groups for attribution retraining. One group were labelled 'success only' and were given only math problems they could solve. The second group, named 'attribution retraining' were given occasional 'unsolveable' problems, their inability to solve them being attributed by the tutor to lack of effort. After twenty five individual training sessions the 'success only' children continued to evidence a deterioration in performance whenever they encountered a failure situation. However, the 'attribution retraining' children did not. Their performance was either maintained or escalated.

The tutor's task in assisting the student to reformulate his attribution for failure away from an internal, stable attribution, can be defined as encouraging an internal, but non-stable attribution such as a lack of effort or lack of confidence, or any of the other attributions which do not damage self esteem.

The tutor also needs to remember that Dweck has shown that the teacher's response to learned helplessness is crucial. Any attempt to 'gloss over' the learning problem encountered will only lead to a continuing sense of learned helplessness in the pupil.

2) A further suggestion is that the environment of the individual experiencing learned helplessness is manipulated in order to change the respondent's 'estimated probability of outcome'.

For the teacher, this means encouraging in the pupil an expectation of success, instead of an expectation of failure. A way of providing this would be to pay careful attention to the material presented to the pupil ensuring that he/she is generally given tasks which match his skill level and that the learning of new skills is structured so that he achieves more success than failure. It must, however, be remembered that it is necessary for the respondent to have some experience of failure. If the tutor presents only material which does not give the experience of failure and therefore, the opportunity to learn coping strategies, this will only result in the continued experience of learned helplessness. Dweck (1975) stresses that failure, when carefully manipulated, can become a cue to escalate effort, whereas continuous reinforcement and errorless learning only render the learner less able to cope with subsequent errors.

Obviously, it is important that the tutor is sensitive to the pupil's needs and is aware of the appropriate time in the learning programme at which failure can be tackled to advantage. For example, in the early stages of reading it is necessary that the student experiences success and builds up enough confidence to develop strategies for coping with unfamiliar words.

This first stage of confidence building may be prolonged in the case of adults who have already experienced failure. Nevertheless, it is necessary that the 'success only' syndrome be avoided and that failure is introduced at an appropriate stage so that coping skills may be learnt.

3) A further important intervention is to make 'highly preferred outcomes less preferred by reducing the desirability of unobtainable outcomes' (Abramson et al p. 33, 1980).

Respondents who experience literacy difficulties may carry with them two inhibitions relating to the above. They may have unrealistic goal aspirations for themselves, and they may imagine that those without literacy difficulties have reached a 'peak of literacy perfection'. For the adult literacy student this may mean an expectation of achieving a standard of perfection which is unobtainable. Further, they may imagine that those who do not share their literacy difficulties have reached this standard of perfection. The tutor should, therefore, aim to show the student that there is no such person as the perfect speller/writer/reader.

There are several ways in which this may be achieved. The tutor could show that he/she experiences uncertainty about the spelling of some words, stressing the necessity to refer to the dictionary on occasions. Rather than telling the students that this is so the tutor may achieve more by enacting it sometimes during a lesson. (N.B. The tutor should be aware that this may initially arouse the hostility of respondents whose expectations of the 'perfect tutor' are being disappointed).

The tutor could also notice spelling mistakes in shops etc. and report these to the students, indicating it does not really matter too much as long as the word is comprehensible. Everything should be done to encourage the students to realize that everyone makes mistakes at some time.

4) Finally, Abramson, Garber and Seligman (1980) point out that as well as expecting to fail and blaming themselves for this, individuals who experience learned helplessness exhibit unrealistic attributions for

success. (Diener and Dweck 1978, Diener and Dweck in press).

An anecdotal example in the researcher's experience is a student who always gave internal, stable, global attributions for literacy failure. When the student had accomplished a task particularly well the researcher praised him, 'You did really well today. Look at that page, not a single mistake'. The pupil replied, 'I didn't do well, I just got lucky'. (This kind of response to success is another way in which tutors can identify learned helplessness).

Therefore, as well as changing attributions for failure, tutors have to encourage respondents to change their attributions for success. Students should be encouraged to rate their own performance realistically and give themselves permission to say 'I did well' when this is the case. The tutor should aim to do this too - always ensuring that praise is given, but only when it is due. When criticism is called for this should not be shirked but it should be handled sensitively so that the student realises that his strategy for dealing with the work, not he/she as a person, is being criticized. The individual experiencing learned helplessness is likely, because of low self esteem, to misinterpret criticism as referring to the 'whole person' rather than just to a particular task.

Criticism of the learned helplessness model

Because Abramson et al's theory is in a state of growth there are, inevitably, areas to be clarified, weaknesses that need strengthening and methodologies to be developed.

The theory is applicable in clinical and social psychology and much research and consequently criticism, is directed at work concerned with depression, which it is not relevant to consider here.

Research in applying the learned helplessness model to education is a growing area, (see Dweck and Goetz, 1977 for a review).

Jackson and Larrance (1979) while acknowledging that the reformulation (Abramson et al 1978) adds new insights, point to a lack of clarity in explaining the antecedents to the stable/unstable, global and specific attributions for helplessness "in terms which are themselves independent of the helplessness phenomena" (1979, p. 682).

Wortman and Dintzer (1978 p. 82) also argue that circularity is a major weakness in the model. This is not wholly valid as Seligman 1975, and Hiroto and Seligman 1975, describe many experiments inducing helplessness. Nevertheless, this is an area in which work remains to be accomplished. It may be for example, that personality factors not yet considered may contribute towards a tendency to experience learned helplessness.

This study has not focussed on these criticisms as they are concerned with the origin of helplessness while this study has been concerned with establishing whether or not learned helplessness was being experienced by respondents.

Abramson et al (1978) have noted that measurement of attribution is complex. While verbal measurement is one valid technique they acknowledge that development is needed in this area to ensure that all avenues are explored in the search for adequate techniques for defining attribution.

This study has aimed to contribute in this area by postulating a role for the repertory grid in locus of control studies.

Adult Literacy Tutors

The relationship between the teach r and the taught has implications for all learning situations. However, adult literacy has particular problems to overcome in this area.

Firstly, the fact that the respondents are adults may mean that they have become more entrenched in their failure role.

Secondly, since many literacy staff are volunteers, not necessarily trained teachers, they may bring to their role many assumptions about teaching which have not been clarified and/or modified by experience and wide reading of relevant texts, as happens during teacher training.

Voluntary tutors may not be aware of the important relationship between the affective and the cognitive domains in learning situations. Therefore, it is possible to hypothesize that some of them may, in a kindly way, thinking to encourage their student, gloss over any failure in exactly the way that Dweck (1975) has shown leads to continuing learned helplessness.

In order for tutors to accomplish the tasks outlined they will have to accept a role far more demanding than that of a trainer in literacy skills and adopt a role more closely resembling that of a counsellor. Perhaps the most satisfactory guidelines to a mutually fruitful partnership are those established by Rogers (1959) as essential in a wide variety of professional work involving relationships with people, within which he includes teaching.

They are congruence (being open), empathy, positive regard and unconditionality of regard. For Rogers the most significant element in

determining an effective outcome is the quality of the interpersonal relationship. If voluntary tutors were familiarized with this concept and the notion of including an element of counselling in their role, where necessary, they could feel confident and reassured of the relevance of such an approach to a learning situation.

Training for tutors

The training procedures for voluntary literacy tutors is an area in which research could usefully be conducted. For example, is training always given? Is there a cohesive programme for training available to all local authorities? (At the schemes with which the writer is familiar tutors are given a two hour group training session once a week for six weeks).

The training literature available for literacy tutors seems to reflect an orientation towards cognitive skills. A typical example of such literature (Roberts, 1976) announcing itself as a 'practical aid intended to help the tutor of adult illiterates assess the students needs as well as plan a programme and evaluate progress'. The booklet is divided into four headed sections.

1. Planning and preparatory work before meeting the student.
2. Activities and skills to prepare for the early stages of reading.
3. Planning, teaching and evaluation of the phonic method.
4. Suggestions for interest materials.

While this is all valuable and necessary information, to concentrate only on the cognitive domain, even in an introductory handbook purporting to discuss students needs, shows that an unnecessarily narrow definition of needs has shaped the contents of the book.

Any training of tutors could be said to be incomplete unless it contains consideration of both cognitive and affective domains.

Until research is conducted in the area of tutor training it is impossible to ascertain how much, if any, attention is given to the affective domain.

Further research

Several methodological considerations arose from the study which may be useful to explore further.

Further research could be conducted to examine the possible role for the repertory grid in locus of control studies.

The relationship between an external locus of control and continuing negative perceptions of self on the grid suggests that the grid may be a useful additional technology in locus of control studies if the previous, present and ideal self, appear as elements. Further research could be conducted which examined the relationship between the grid and locus of control in more depth.

The researcher's study has established a link between neuroticism and the distance between the ideal self and the present self on the repertory grid, those furthest away from the ideal self tending to show more neuroticism, as measured on Eysenck's PI.

Morrelli, Krotinger and Moore (1979) found a relationship between neuroticism, as measured by Eysenck's PI, and locus of control on Levenson's IPC Scale, those showing most neuroticism being likely to "believe they are not in control of reinforcement contingencies and furthermore, that consequences are determined by chance" (p. 153, 1979).

A locus of control study could attempt to develop further methodologies by relating all three variables. (The Gold, Eysenck's PI, Levenson's IPC Scale). The role of the powerful others dimension on Levenson's scale appears to have been insufficiently investigated in the Morelli, et al, study and further work would also need to be conducted in this area.

During the use of Levenson's IPC Scale in this study it became necessary to compare the internality scores from this scale with other variables outside the scale. It became obvious that it would not be correct to take the raw internality scores, since these gave no indication of whether internality, powerful others, or chance was viewed as the dominant mode.

A measure (called R) was used, which was based on the algebraic difference between the I score and the higher of the other two (P or C). (For full details see statistics chapter, hypothesis 2b, part 2, page 172).

That statistic (R) could be used in further investigations of locus of control which include Levenson's IPC Scale as a measure and which wish to correlate an index of inter-relationship between internality and the other two modes.

Having outlined further research in the area of methodology, consideration will now be given to further research relating directly to tutors and/or students, and the alleviation of learned helplessness.

The content and availability of training schemes for voluntary tutors is a suitable area for further research.

Perhaps a study in this area could include an examination of the aspirations and expectations of voluntary literacy tutors. For example, it could be fruitful to ascertain the tutor's attitude and also to define what literacy means to them, since this will have an impact on how they approach their task as literacy tutor. This could be accomplished by applying the

repertory grid technique.

The information which could be elicited from the voluntary tutors by their completing repertory grids would be useful to those training them, but would be equally valuable to the voluntary tutors themselves. Enabling them to become fully aware of their own perceptions of literacy would be important in developing knowledge which could increase their chance of becoming more effective tutors.

An anecdotal example of how the tutor's attitude to literacy can affect tuition can be illustrated by describing two students who joined the researcher's literacy group after they had been taught by voluntary tutors on a one to one basis.

One student arrived at the class with a list of books headed '50 books you must read' which had been given to him by his individual tutor. The student had been presented with one of these books each week (they were established classics, Dickens etc.) told to read it and be prepared to discuss it with the tutor a week later. This student had struggled for some weeks before opting to attend classes.

The second student was totally illiterate when individual tuition commenced and had been taught to read by using the Ladybird reading scheme. She had been presented by her tutor with the whole scheme, in numerical order, until she had read every available book, whereupon the tutor suggested to her that she attend classes. No attempt was made to introduce newspapers, magazines or suitable literature, which meant the student's concept of reading was unnecessarily limited.

While these may be isolated examples, there is no way of composing a picture of the literacy expectations of tutors until research is conducted in this area.

In the light of the findings of learned helplessness in this study, a useful study could be conducted into the teaching methods tutors use, particularly, the handling of problems and learning failure situations experienced by the students.

Here again the grid could be a useful research tool. While such a study should include observation of tutors and their pupils, understanding could be enhanced if tutors completed grids which elicited their perceptions of a 'good' and 'bad' student. They could also be asked to elicit situations with their pupils which they found difficult to cope with, and situations in which they felt themselves to be at ease.

The future role for volunteers in literacy schemes would seem to be established. Literacy tuition could not possibly have been available on the scale it has been without either voluntary labour or Utopian amounts of funding. Therefore, it seems important that research is conducted in this area.

The four techniques advocated by Abramson, Garber and Seligman (1980) for alleviating helplessness (outlined earlier) could be the focus of research examining the efficacy of the teaching strategies.

A small study could be conducted by comparing two groups of respondents experiencing learned helplessness.

One group could be taught by a tutor applying the above techniques.

A second group would receive no special treatment.

Progress could be monitored over time to observe if there were any differences in the two groups.

A larger study could be carried out by instigating six groups.

4 groups could each receive one of the techniques.
One group could receive a combination of all techniques, while a further group could receive no special treatment.
Progress could be monitored over time and comparison for the efficacy of the different techniques could be made.

The literacy movement: past, present and future.

This study was commenced at a time of optimum development in the literacy field. The existence of large numbers of adults with literacy difficulties had become established as a political reality. The government had set up a unit to co-ordinate information and some aspects of funding for literacy, which was to be provided at local authority level.

The national television network was showing a series of literacy programmes at peak viewing times, which included a telephone number which the viewer could ring immediately and through which arrangements were made to forward personal details to the appropriate local authority. This, and wide advertising of the scheme, which even included one large supermarket chain distributing information leaflets, created a climate of public awareness. (Full details of the development of the scheme are given by Charnley 1979).

As was shown in the interview findings in this study, many respondents came forward for tuition having learned of the scheme through the media.

Since this study was initiated there have been many changes. Although short term funding for the literacy unit has been continued by successive governments, its brief and title have been changed so that it now embraces not only literacy provision but numeracy, basic skills and second language English speaking as well. Whilst the remit has been extended, the funding has not, and this inevitably means less provision of services. Literacy no longer receives media attention. The BBC television programmes were first moved from peak viewing time and have now virtually ceased.

At the same time there is no reason to believe that the literacy problem has diminished to the extent that media coverage might suggest. Of an estimated 2/3 million people needing literacy help, approximately 200,000 have received tuition. How many of these have ceased tuition because they are satisfied with the standard they have reached and how many left for other reasons is not known.

The future prognosis for the whole of adult education appears very bleak at the present time. This is reflected in the Government figure for spending on education for 1983/4. Out of a total of £12,548 million, adult education received a tiny proportion. The figure for basic education is about 0.05% (i.e. 1/2000). ACACE calculate that 3 million people need help with basic education (1/20) of the population. It can be seen that at present it would be impossible to provide help to all those in need. Reorganisation of local government funding is putting increasing pressure on local authorities. Adult education is the only branch of education, at present, which there is no statutory obligation on a local authority to provide.

All the calculations of the numbers needing literacy help at present are guesses to some extent. This situation could be resolved, at least for the future, if all school leavers were tested in basic skills. At the moment it is not known how many school leavers have a reading age too low to allow them to cope adequately with everyday demands. Such information would be useful to schools and colleges in helping with curriculum planning and the allocating of resources. Colleges are now establishing a Youth Training Scheme for young unemployed school leavers and such courses as this could probably be planned more effectively if such a statistic were available.

This thesis could end with a discussion about the importance of access to literacy in a democratic society. The praiseworthy concept of life long education, the chance for all to step back on the educational ladder, even at the bottom rung, could be advocated at length. Instead, the writer would like to give the last word to her students.

One man, a teenager in the days following the war when little literacy provision was available, describes how he thought of trying to obtain help by getting into prison:

> "I knew they educated you if you went inside 'cos it happened to one of my mates. He learned to read and write inside. You know when you're 16 or so you always get a chance to become a rogue. I often wondered whether to do it. See it wouldn't have bothered me if I got caught 'cos I could have learned".

It seems a sad reflection on a society that he saw the only access to education as being through the prison system.

There will probably always be some students who do not take the opportunities offered them at school. The door should therefore, remain open so that those who failed on return to study. This access

should be easily available to all (community colleges are an interesting development in this area), and it is important that no stigma is attached to returning to a situation of previous failure because, as one student's remark shows, the decision to return to a failure situation may take some courage:

> "What do they teach you at school? They teach you one thing - that you can't do anything. They teach you that you're good for nothing".

APPENDIX ONE

Defining perceptions of self

A search for the definition of what is meant by 'self' has fascinated philosophers through the ages and early psychologists argued about the extent to which it belonged within the former discipline. The history of the self in psychology begins with James (1890) and has been developed since by the Symbolic Interactionists and Phenomenologists. Behaviourist psychology (Skinner 1938, 1953) influential in the second to fourth decades of this century could find no place for 'mind' or mental events which were not amenable to rigorous scientific methodology. To the Behaviourist the study of self represented a subjective interpretation of internal experience, difficult to measure or validate. This assumption that aspects of the self were closed to experimental validation was constantly challenged (Blodgett 1929, Kubo 1933, Todd 1916). Work was carried out on the relationship of self ratings to ratings by others, self pictures of various ethnic groups, self concept of delinquents and self concept assessed by adjectival check lists.

The Behaviourists gradually widened their stance as evidence accumulated which was incomprehensible unless credance was given to internal processes. Burns (1979) suggested that although Behaviourist and Phenomenological self theories have quite distinct models of man, they support each other in that while the latter stresses that self attitudes influence behaviour, perceptions, needs and goals, it does not show how change can occur in the self concept, perceptions or behaviour, and that behaviourist principles can be introduced at this stage. For example, someone with feelings of failure needs to be presented with positive reinforcement contingencies as a way of increasing self esteem.

Symbolic interactionism sees the self as 'closely knit' with society. Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) suggested that a person reacts to his environment according to the way in which he interprets that environment. The way in which they interpret is seen as a product of social interaction, which is modified by individual interpretation.

The Phenomenological approach has dominated the study of self for the past twenty years. It is realized that the self is not directly observable, but that all that is available for study are perceptions based on inference and interpretation of observed behaviour. Behaviour is not viewed only as a response to outside stimulii in society; equal importance is given to the individual's feelings about himself. For example, whether a person has a negative or positive self-concept is likely to 'colour' the way he perceives his reality and the way he behaves. In order to maintain a consistent picture of self the individual tries to avoid conflict and incompatible ideas and situations. Therefore, his perception of 'reality' is selective and distorted by defence mechanisms, motives, goals and attitudes (Bruner and Goodman 1947, Vinacke 1952, Judson and Cofer 1956). Kelly's (1955) interpretation of 'man the scientist' has its basis in phenomonology, Kelly's view being that man observes the universe through bi-polar goggles (or constructs). The repertory grid was developed by Kelly as a way of observing these constructs and, thereby, building a picture of the individual's universe. The grid has the further use that it can be subjected to statistical analysis.

Having briefly outlined the main areas of development in understanding what is meant by 'self' the work of some influential psychologists will be discussed in greater detail since the notion of 'self' is central to this study.

James (1890) identified the self as an object of knowledge consisting of all the individual regards as belonging to himself. Included in this are the social, spiritual and material self. The social self includes the individual's perception of how others view him. His emotions and desires are seen as contained within the spiritual self, while the material self, as well as containing the individual's body, extends outside himself to include family and possessions. James saw all aspects of the self as being able to evoke heightened self esteem and, therefore, satisfaction, or lowered self-esteem and, therefore, dissatisfaction. He felt that limitations either of time, talent or both, could prevent maximization of our various selves and he suggested that man, therefore, chooses a particular self "on which to stake his salvation" (p. 310). When this is chosen self-esteem can be raised by achievement or reduced by deficiencies, but this only applies to activities relevant to that aspect of self. James summed this up neatly, referring to his own choice: "I who have staked my all on being a psychologist am mortified if others know more psychology than I. But I am content to wallow in the grossest ignorance of Greek" (p. 310). James summed up self esteem thus:

$$\text{self esteem} = \frac{\text{success}}{\text{pretentions}}$$

Cooley (1902) defined the self as "that which is designated in common speech by pronouns of the first person singular, me, my, myself, mine" (p. 136). He developed the idea of a 'looking glass self' - that is the concept of an individual perceiving himself as others perceive him. This idea was extended by Mead (1934) who pointed out that individuals learn to perceive the world as others do in order to anticipate their reactions. Mead suggested there are as many selves as there are social situations. These different selves vary in the significance they have for the individual, some personality variables being very situation specific.

Mead saw behaviour being regulated in the absence of external pressure by the individual judging how 'generalized others' would respond to his actions. For him the development of a stable and realistic self image is a sign of maturity.

For Lecky (1945) the self concept formed the nucleus of the personality. The personality is seen as dynamic, involving continuous assimulation of new ideas and the modification or rejection of old ideas. However, the major motive is seen as seeking for unity since any threat to the organisation of the personality produces distress. "Behaviour expresses the effort to maintain the integrity and unity of the organization. The nucleus of the system, around which the rest of the system revolves is the individual's idea or conception of himself". (p. 29).

Snygg and Coombs (1949), following Lecky, defined the self concept as the parts of the phenomenal fields which the individual has differentiated as definite and reasonably stable characteristics of himself. They criticize behaviourism as giving rise to "a mechanistic conception of human beings as physical objects whose behaviour is the result of forces acting upon them". (p. 310). They stressed that "man is not a puppet bandied about at the mercy of forces exerted upon him. He is a creature of discretion who selects his perceptions from the world he lives in. He is not the victim of events, but is capable of perceiving, interpreting, even creating events". (p. 312). They see man as "a growing dynamic creature being continuously in search of adequacy". (p. 312).

Rogers (1951) built on this conception of self which had fused self-as-process and self-as-object. His self theory developed from his clinical work and was redefined later (1959). Initially he defined self as "composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics

and abilities, the percepts and concepts of self in relation to others and to the environment; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences, objects, goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or negative valence" (p. 136). When he redefined his theory 'self actualization' became the only motive and self concept was defined as "the organized consistent, conceptual, Gestalt composed of the characteristics of the 'I' or 'me', the perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' to others and the various aspects of life together with the value attached to these perceptions". (p. 200, 1959). Here Rogers seems to use self-concept to mean what others have called 'self'. He also introduced the idea of an 'ideal self' as "The self concept which the individual would most like to possess and upon which he places the highest value for himself". (p. 200, 1959). For Rogers the individual is always in a state of becoming; when he does not feel threatened he will be able to assimilate new experiences which will involve changes in his self image, moving positively towards the 'true self' he can become.

One of the most recent developments in 'self' has been Epstein's (1973) suggestion that the self concept should be identified as a self theory. He sees this theory as a conceptual tool for accomplishing a purpose: to optimize the pleasure/pain balance for the individual. For him this is fundamental and it is only after this that the individual uses his system to facilitate maintenance of self esteem (whether high or low) and to organize the 'data of experience' so that it can be effectively handled. Epstein admits that his theory has much in common with Kelly's (1955), but he says that unlike Kelly's 'man the scientist' who needs the distinction between self and non-self to study the objective world, Epstein's 'man the human being' needs this distinction only in as much as it contributes to the satisfaction of personal needs and happiness. Epstein's interpretation of Kelly is, of course, open to question.

Because Kelly's personal construct theory (1955) is important to the methodology of this study his idea of self will be considered in greater depth in the chapter dealing with methodology. It is briefly outlined here.

Kelly, while acknowledging a debt to Lecky,took the view that self consistency is not the major motive for man. He suggests that, "It is seeking to anticipate the whole world of events and thus relate himself to them that best explains man's psychological processes. If he acts to preserve the system it is because the system is an essential chart for his personal adventures, not because it is a self contained island of meaning in an ocean of inconsequentialities" (p. 59, Kelly 1963). Kelly's theory is built upon a fundamental postulate and a series of eleven corollaries. His fundamental postulate is "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the way in which he anticipates events" (p. 46). Kelly refers to 'self' as, "a group of events which are alike in a certain way and, in that same way, necessarily different from other events. The way in which the events are alike is the self ... The self having been thus conceptualized can now be used as a thing, a datum or an item in the context of a superordinate construct ... When the person begins to use himself as a datum in forming constructs, exciting things begin to happen. He finds that the constructs he forms act as rigorous controls upon his behaviour ... this behaviour in comparison to other people is particularly affected. It is of course, the comparison he sees, which affects his behaviour. Thus, much of his social life is controlled by the comparisons he has come to see between himself and others". (p. 131, 1955). Personal Construct Theory can view the self both as a construct and an element (these terms are explained in detail in the methodology chapter). The self as a construct is the 'me-ness' or consciousness permeating the whole life; the self as an element is ourself in the different roles we play (functions we perform) in our life. For example 'me as husband', 'me as father', 'me as lecturer'

'me as friend'. It is this second aspect of self that would be measured by any self measuring technique, including the Repertory Grid.

It can be seen that notions of self are not always easily or clearly defined. Although the phenomenologists fused some of the contradictions in notions of self their unwillingness to admit the influence of the unconscious leaves a still incomplete picture. Although the idea of self in this study owes much to phenomenology and to Kelly it was felt that by using the term 'perceptions of self' rather than 'self concept' such confusion could be avoided. The self concept can be interpreted in many different ways. What is meant here by perceptions of self is some of the views a person holds about himself. There is no suggestion that these are all the perceptions he holds; they may not be the most important ones to him. Because they are concerned with his role as a person with literacy difficulties who is functioning in a society which values literacy they are the most important as far as this study is concerned. The ideal self is seen as attributes of the self that the individual thinks he would like to possess. Repertory grid studies have shown that the ideal self can be surprisingly stable over time (Bannister and Fransella, 1971).

APPENDIX TWO

Interview schedule

Section one - remembering

1. What decided you to come for help?

   Probe: Could you think if there was an actual incident that made you decide to come?

2. How did you hear of the scheme?

3. How did your family feel about your joining the scheme?

   Probe: Were they not very interested or did they encourage you?

4. Was it reading, writing, spelling or all of these you felt you needed help with?

5. Before you came to the class can you remember what you imagined it would be like?

   Probe:

   other students
   1. like you, therefore, you didn't feel bothered.
   2. friendly/unfriendly
   3. encouraging/not encouraging

   tutor
   1. friendly/unfriendly
   2. helpful/unhelpful
   3. telling you what to do/letting you help in decisions about what to do.

6. receiving GROUP tuition:

   Why did you decide you would like to be taught in a group?

   receiving ONE to ONE tuition:

   Why did you decide on 1 - 1 instead of group tuition?

   Do you think you will eventually join a group?

   If no: why?

   receiving BOTH types of tuition:

   What is it you like about being able to come to both?

7. When you started what did you think you would get out of joining the scheme?

   Probe: help with reading/writing/spelling
   confidence
   both

8. When you joined the scheme, how long did you think it would take to reach your goal?

9. <u>Now</u>, are your ideas about this different.

Section two - Now

1. Have your ideas about classes/tutors changed with experience?

   If YES: How?

2. Are you able to study at home?

   Probe: physical conditions
   time
   inclination

3. Has coming to classes made a difference to what you do in your spare time?

4. Has coming to classes made a difference to what you do in your spare time for enjoyment?

   Probe: Do you feel you are doing more reading?

   If YES: well, being able to read more of what? Books, newspapers, magazines?

5. Since starting tuition are there ways you feel different e.g. at home, at work, with your mates?

Section Three - Educational background

Now I'd like to look back to your school days. We're talking about when you were at school.

1. While you were at school do you think they knew at home, that you had problems with reading/writing/spelling?

   If YES: Can you give any examples of ways they tried to help you?

2. Do you think any other members of your family had difficulties with reading/writing/spelling?

   Probe: parents
   brothers and sisters

3. When you were at school can you remember when you first became aware of having reading/writing/spelling difficulties?

4. What do you think the reasons were that you had difficulties?

   Probe: Some people think it's because they had trouble with hearing/eyesight, or missing school through illness or moving or maybe something to do with school.

5. What did the school do about it?

6. How did the school help you?

7. What are your memories of school like?

   Probe: Summarise their memories and ask 'so, on the whole are your memories of school pleasant or unpleasant?

Section Four - Future

1. How do you think you'll know when you're ready to leave the class?

   Probe: (a) Is there something you will have done that makes you feel 'this is the time'?

   (b) When your reading/writing/spelling reaches a certain level? What level?

   (c) When you feel confident?

   (d) When your tutor suggests it?

2. Do you think you'll go on to further classes?

   If YES: What?
   Why?

3. Since you started attending classes has what you want to do with your life chan ed in any way?

Section Five - Return to probe

1. Do you think there has been an improvement in your reading/writing/spelling?

   If YES: (a) Why?

   (b) Can you give me any examples?

   If NO: (a) When you do improve do you think it will change your life in any way?

   (b) Why don't you think you've improved?

   (c) Can you give me any examples?

2. Do you think this improvement has changed your life in any way?

Factual Section

Sex

Age

Married

Job

Length of time attending class/tutor

Thank you for your help. Is there anything you'd like to ask me?

APPENDIX THREE

Back-up Interviews

Provision was made for eight further interviews to back up the thirteen original ones, to be conducted. A total of ten students were asked to participate; there were only two refusals to take part.

Between the arrangement to conduct these interviews and their elicitation various changes took place in the structural organization of the college concerned which meant that there was a redefinition of roles for the person from whom permission to conduct the interviews was obtained. There were now, in effect, two people with equal responsibility for running a department which one of them had previously been running. This change had caused considerable feelings of insecurity and threat, as well as a personality clash between the two people involved. The researcher became a victim of this clash. After four interviews had been conducted in conditions replicating earlier interviews one of those in charge sought to conclude the research by suggesting that the students were being co-erced since "nobody could possibly want to talk about her/himself for an hour". The researcher asked that the person involved accompany her when she met the student as arranged to satisfy himself that no co-ersion was involved. When it became obvious that the student was quite happy to participate in the interview the person became quite agitated and said that it was impossible for the interview to last for more than thirty minutes. Although it proved possible to cover the schedule in this time it was decided that it would be better to terminate research at this centre.

When these five interviews were compared with those from the initial respondents, there was no significant variation in the responses of the

two groups. Since those interviewed had been selected randomly from those who volunteered to participate (i.e. they were not the first five to volunteer) it was decided that it would not be necessary to locate a further centre and conduct more interviews at this stage. The original thirteen interviews were then taken as generally representative of this type of student.

APPENDIX FOUR

Specimen interview transcript

N.B. Quotations used in the main text are shown underlined.

Student 13

Student 13 is a 37 year old male who has attended classes for $2\frac{1}{2}$ years.

R Right, the first question is, I wonder if you can remember what decided you to come for help?

S Um, I saw the advert on the television and, er, it was just on the spot decision. That was it. I just picked up the phone and rung. Don't a - I don't know why (laugh) couldn't tell why. I'd seen it before - the advertising on there. And it didn't do anything to me. But this particular time I just picked up the phone and rung the number.

R Was it, was it something about the programme do you think?

S No, I think I just came to terms with meself you know. I said 'well I'm going to do it'. I don't think it was anything about the programme as such that persuaded me. I was just sort of watching it and I thought 'Right I'm going to do it now'. I'd thought about it before but didn't have the courage, and er, but this time for some reason I just did it and that was it.

R What made you watch the programme. Can you remember that?

S Um (pl) Yes. I was off work and I had 'flu and I was watching the horse racing (laugh) and it happened to come on (laugh) either before or in between (laugh) I didn't put it on specially to watch it at all.

R But you had happened to see it before?

S Yes

R Had you specifically watched it before?

S No, I'd seen snippets and heard about it, and seen the posters they did for the libraries - and often stopped and thought 'yes' and then changed me mind again, you know, and um. So there was nothing really from the advertising that made me do it. I was just ... it was just something I looked at and thought 'Right I'm going to do it' and that was it.

R Did you used to go to the library then?

S I used to pass the library because the wife used to go to the library and get out books. And um, I used to attempt. I'd say 'well get me a book'. She used to get me a book and, um, I used to attempt it and have trouble in reading it to start with. All right if the first two or three words you knew. You come to the next six you didn't - you just used to chuck the book down and put the book away - you know. Struggling to get to the end of the sentence and, er, just put it down then. You just didn't pick it up any more then.

R O.K. How did you hear of the scheme?

S (p2) Just through the newspaper I think mainly.

R You used to read a newspaper?

S Yeah, um (p2) 'The Sun' because it was the easiest one to read. But knowing the symbol, you know, knowing it I noticed it and, er, mainly got it from there (p3).

R How did your family feel about you joining the scheme?

S Er um. Well the wife was pleased you know. Um (p2) That's it mainly you know. The rest of the family (p2) didn't really know, you know (p2).

R Was it reading, writing, spelling or all of these you felt you needed help with?

S No, mainly spelling (p1) and, er, some reading naturally. But mainly it was spelling. Writing always... you know... I can copy anything down you know.

R Yes

S No trouble with the writing at all. But my main thing was the spelling (p5)

R Before you came to the classes can you remember what you imagined it would be like?

S Frightening (laugh) Um. (p3) Not really. I think, um, back to when I was at school and thinking how that was frightening (laugh). That was about the only thing that got me nervous - meeting other people I suppose, nervous about it and having to learn. Didn't discuss it - never discussed it, with anybody in me life. So it was all of a sudden finding yourself speaking to other people and realising there was other people the same as me ... had trouble. And er, I think that was the main, the main thing at first.

R That was how you imagined the students, can you remember how you imagined the tutor would be?

S (p3) Well having had a private tutor at home before I came to the class, um, I knew exactly how you would be (laugh).

R Oh!

S No, you know I knew that I could speak to you about it and not feel (p2) like I used to feel um, very frightened, and frightened to speak about it, nervous and sweat (laugh) you know. This ... I think this happens to quite a few you know. Even talking to some of the class at the moment - the feeling is exactly the same. You get tight inside and go to pieces completely (p4).

R Er, why did you decide you'd like to be taught in a group?

S Um, I had a tutor at home for about a year and a half (p2). She - we both felt she'd done what she could for me at home. She thought it was time I met other people in the same situation in a class. And, er, I felt yeah I would like to try it now having a little bit more confidence. Yes I would like to try a class. And, er, I went you know there and the feeling was still there (laugh) you know, it was still there (laugh) (p3).

R So, do you come to both?

S No, I only come here now, er, to the class. Um, my teacher has just had a baby so that's taking up most of her time at the moment. But, er, I find coming to the class and doing the homework and I read a lot more now than I ever used to... More confident - and I've progressed from 'The Sun' to the 'Mail' (laugh) which is nice you know. I read that every day and I also have occasional books from the library. And, er, I find that, you know, at the moment its enough, with what I can take in myself, you know. Um, I know me tutor sort of had fears I may get ... have too much coming at me and I may get bogged down a bit. But er, the amount I'm doing now - feel confident that I can handle that. Plus working, plus everything else without, you know sort of, too heavy on me, you know.

R Yes

S And liable to throw it in and say ... if you know I can't do it.

R O.K. fine. When you started - this is not when you started the class, but when you started going to your individual tutor - what did you think you would get out of joining the scheme?

S (p3) Just the ability to spell. That was my, you know, that was my one thing (p1). Really, I didn't, I didn't have, you know, any big dreams. But just to be able to spell when you're confronted with um, a form to fill in. You just fill it in without panic. That's the main thing.

R Right (p3) When you joined the scheme how long did you think it would take to reach your goal?

S (p1) I don't think I set myself a time. I knew it would be - you know, I knew it would take time - take a long time. Um, I didn't think well, a year and I shall be able to do it. I didn't even think of how long it would take, you know. I just wanted to be able to do it. So I wasn't worried if it was a year or two or three or four. No I didn't think about it at all .

R Er, how about now?

S (p3) I still, I'm still not Well I want to be able to do it by the end of this year. Just ... No ... I haven't, I haven't really thought about it in that term you know, start and finish. I haven't thought about it like that at all.

R O.K. well this sections about now.

S Mmmm

R Have your ideas about classes and tutors changed with experience?

S Yes, um, I'm certainly not frightened any more. That's the main thing (p1). I enjoy it, um, the help, talking to other students in the class, which I find easy now I've got more confidence now than I've ever had. And I know it's only since I've been doing the scheme - the confidence. But the confidence has just bubbled out now. Perhaps a bit too much (laugh) (p2).

R That's nice. Are you able to study at home?

S Yes. Well when I say yes - when I've got the time, yes, you know.

R Yes, well have you got a particular place that you keep where you go to study?

S Yeah. Well it isn't too bad. See I've got two living rooms, so you can be in one room with the television and everything else going on while you're in the other room by yourself. But the wife helps me with studying at home.

R She works with you?

S Yeah, yeah. Well she's around all the time if I need help. Well some things we do we do together you know, go through it together and I find that helps.

R What sort of things? Things you've already done in the class?

S Yes things we've done in the class. Things I've done with the tutor. Um, I got a book what me tutor got. It's an English book and its got sentences in it and different words and association with words and crosswords so we sort of work through that. We work on that together. Specially, the crosswords, you know. Whereas before you'd just look at a crossword and go 'phew' now I think 'we'll have a go at a crossword tonight'. We both sit down and we do it and I find that helps with spelling, you know. Specially, if you're not sure of the middle part of a word and you have the letters set out from the other clues. You think 'oh yeah' you can see a word fitting in there which I could never do before (p3).

R How, how often would you say you worked at home? Is it something you do regularly or just when you have time, or when somebody else tells you?

S Um (p2) I like to try and do it about twice a week which, with coming to the classes gives me three times a week, you know. But sometimes I'm not always able to. There's people knocking at the door and 'What's happening?' but I try, you know, a couple of nights at home.

R Has coming to classes made a difference to what you do in your spare time?

S (p3) No, I don't think so. Not me spare time. Well, yes, except for reading. Yeah, reading. I tend to read a book now, and enjoy a book if its good. Other than that no, because I've always had a busy spare time anyway. So it's just slotted in with whatever else I do (p2).

R You don't feel its taking away from your spare time at all then?

S No, no (p3)

R Can you remember what the last book you read was?

S Um, um, Bruce Tully 'The Long Distance Runner'. It was, it was about running. I like running. I like athletics. I tend to, um ... read sports books anyway. I like boxing - Henry Cooper naturally (laugh) um, any sports. Mainly I like so I stick to sports books mainly at the moment.

R And is that what your other spare time activities used to tend to be - mostly sport?

S Yeah, mostly sports and growing vegetables (laugh). I suppose that's a sport as well really. But I don't know (laugh).

R A worthy one. Um, since starting tuition are there ways you feel different either at work, at home or with your mates?

S (p2) Yeah. Mainly the confidence you know (p2). That's the main thing I think you know. Because if you can start to spell now and someone comes up with a piece of paper in their hand and says 'look at this' you know you can stand and read it and not make out you can read it which I did in the past. And I think most people make out they can read whether they can or not. In that way I think it's helped.

R That that's at work, and with your mates that sort of thing would apply?

S Yeah

R What about home?

S Um (p5) I think that now we ... I get the pleasure of writing out the bills now. I get the cheques now for the bills (laugh) to give me practice (laugh). I don't know whether it's a good thing or a bad thing (laugh) But um, (p2) I suppose taking a bit of responsibility from the wife. She used to do the bills and writing off for things. But now I can do it (p2) you know. I think that's the main thing.

R So when you first got married she had to do all those sort of things did she?

S Yes

R And how did you feel about that?

S (p2) Well I suppose its, um, it was hidden. It was hidden. It's been hidden from way back, from when I can first remember from the school, you know. You try to hide the feeling you had, and I suppose because the wife did it and I was glad for her to do it and it was easy for her to do it, therefore I was happy. If it had been the situation where she can't do it or no she wasn't going to do it, things would have been different, you know. I don't know, but because she was willing to do it I thought 'that's good' saves me!' But then again I'd no need to bother, you know. Um (p1) and so I might have felt differently about it. But at the time I didn't you know.

R So when you talk about hidden feelings, you mean that you hid the feeling from yourself or from her or both?

S Both I should say I think. I think, everyone, well who I've spoken to who's been in the same situation as me hides it from theirself (p1). I think this is the main thing. I know I did until that fateful day I got on the blower to do something about it. (p1). But it needed a lot of courage as well. It did need a lot of courage you know and (p1) I can't say where the courage came from and that I just did it.

R You can't remember a particular incident?

S No, no, there's nothing sort of sticks in my mind which made me think 'all right I must do this' (p2). For some reason, I don't know whether I just come to terms with meself (laugh) and just did it. I don't know.

R So, now what do you think the feeling you were hiding from yourself and everybody else was then?

S Um (p3) um (p1) Shame I suppose. It's a funny thing. You have trouble with reading and spelling and anybody who's never had that problem don't know the feeling you get. Its, um (p2) it's hard to explain. Um (p5) I don't know the best way to explain it. Um (p4) I suppose you're basically ... You tend to think that you're completely thick because you can't take something in. And um, you find that somebody can't add up. They say 'I can't add 2 and 2' and people laugh. If you say you can't spell then there's something wrong with you. You know, they don't want to know you. But if it's arithmetic or you can't add up 'Oh well, huh, he can't add 2 and 2'and they laugh. But, er, you know, if you can't write and you're confronted with somebody standing over you and they say 'can you spell so and so' and you just don't know, you know, then I think every bit of life drains out of your body you know. It really does you know, you just panic. You feel yourself panic. You just feel your heart pound, you start to sweat you know. I don't know, you know, other than that (p3).

R Now I'd like to look back to your schooldays O.K.? We're talking about when you were at school. So while you were at school do you think they knew at home that you had problems with your reading and spelling?

S No, no

R They didn't know?

S No. Um (p3) Neither my mother or father took any interest at all in school work. Um, basically you went to school and you came home from school. Basically other than that I can never remember my father sitting down and reading to me (p2) you know or even - there was books around. Yeah ... we always had books around and he read and me mother and that. But never not once personally did one of them ever sit down with me and went through a book with me. I've got no recollection of that whatsoever. So I've always had problems, right from the very first. At school we used to go into the headmistress's class twice a week for reading. So right from the beginning I had trouble, you know, and um, I started going to a school when I was four and I can remember when I was six going into the class and sitting there and reading a book. I think it was about Bob. I think I can remember. But um, I always had problems but it was never ... Whether the school ever told them I had problems with me reading or not I don't know. I certainly never told them. Um, the school reports all used to go home but whether they used to look or not, I don't know. But I can never remember having any help at all (p1).

R You don't know if it was on your school report?

S Well, later on at me secondary school yes I knew that was there. Um 'Tries hard could do better in English'. That was about it, you know. Um. Arithmetic I was always good at, you know, but you know, um (p1) other than that I can never remember. I can't imagine my father if he had known not doing something about it. Obviously he wasn't that, what can I say, interested, but he didn't see I wasn't reading proper or you know he just accepted that I wasn't reading and that was it. I don't know.

R Mmmm

S But I never, as I say, I never had any help. I never had any homework to take home. Never did homework all the time I was at school.

R What, they just didn't give you any or you just didn't do it?

S We didn't have any. We just didn't get it. Never. I've never had to do homework at home. This is at my secondary school as well (p2). Um, I know, well I can always ... it must have been the last two or three years at school that ... Um ... This is when there's forty in the class you know, and um you'd get a word written up on the board and they'd throw it out 'Right spell so and so'. You was only asked once (p1) and that was it. Then you was left you know, and you was at the back and that's where you stayed. Um, it was only at the first school they took an interest in our learning. I had trouble reading but certainly I was never helped, never at all in secondary school.

R And did it help when you went into the headmistress's to read?

S Um, yes. I can always remember it at the junior school that I did come first once in the class. Once. I think the only time in me life. But I can still remember that you know. So obviously it did help. It did help.

R That was after you'd received help for reading was it?

S Yeah, that was towards, just before I went up to secondary school. But from the secondary school no help at all. None at all, and because, because, of that you tend to sink down and down and down. You sit at the back and you know, you don't want to be seen. You sort of, you know you're going to make a fool of yourself, and this is probably one of the reasons you do it even. You tend to sit in the corner and not say anything because you didn't want to make a fool of yourself in front of your mates (p2). Um. And so being in a classroom where there used to be forty in a class was just one or two in a class and that's where you stayed. Not like it is today where you know that a lot more is done to help children who are b....er, er, a bit backward in reading and spelling, where the teacher will spend more time with those than the ones who are bright - which makes sense. But when I was at school it was the other way round. You know if you was good you was all right, but if you was a bit slow you was left behind. Um.

R So what do you think it was particularly about this year when you came first in your class?

S (p3) Just the fact of coming first I think. You know, just, you know, you, you know (p2) you got on with it a bit, I suppose.

R Was it a different teacher? Do you think that could have made a difference?

S (p2) No we had the same teacher right the way through (p2). You did in those days (laugh). It's a bit, it's quite a few years ago. Too many years ago (laugh).

R Um, we're going back a bit. Do you think other members of your family had difficulties with reading, writing or spelling?

S Um. I think me brother and sister did. Me sister did until she left school and went to work. Then she seemed to be all right. But, um, I seem to get bits and pieces because I think me brother had problems. Not so bad as me, but I think, when I look now it looks to me my sister was one step down, my brother was two and I was three.

R Mmmm

S In the reading and spelling, you know.

R What sort of things made you feel that? Can you give me any examples?

S (p3) No I think it's just a feeling I've sort of got inside me you know. I couldn't say anything pacific,(sic) you know, gives me that. It's just a feeling. That's how I feel you know, or how I felt that things were, you know. I can't think of anything that could put it clearer than that.

R What about your parents. Do you think they had difficulties?

S (p2) Me father didn't. Me dad's good and when I say good I mean good. As I say me father, me father always did all the bills and anything to do with money, and writing. Me dad always did that. But now he's gone and mum has to do it and she's coping all right. So basically she ... it's just while they was together and that was it you know. Mum's O.K. too.

R Yeah O.K. Can you remember when you were first at school. Can you remember when you first became aware of having reading and spelling difficulties?

S (p1) Um (p4) Yes, when I was really about six. I sort of, you know, all of a sudden. I was in the headmistress's classroom for this one lesson. Just for reading you know, and then I remember all right, I was having trouble you know. But, um, spelling must have come a bit later on, you know.

R Yeah, how many were there in her room? Can you remember?

S (p2) Five or six (p2)

R And how did it appear? I mean was it like a treat going to her room?

S (p4) Yes, yeah. Probably going back to it really it's being in the same class with children, well grown-ups now, who are having the same problem, knowing that she knew that you had this problem and you wasn't trying to hide it. I think even then you were trying to hide it from the other children in the class (p3).

R What do you think the reasons were that you had trouble?

S (p4) I don't know.

R Well some people think it's because they had trouble with their eyesight or missed school through illness or moving or maybe something to do with school.

S No, I had none of these - touch wood. We lived in the same place for twenty years. Er, I only went to two schools, the junior and the senior school. Er, I never had any trouble with my eyes or anything. Um (p2) I always went to school. I can never remember not going to school. Very seldom played truant (laugh). I used to get a right hander and it used to hurt (laugh). No, but I can't remember being weeks or months off at all. I know I was ... Well me brother and me sister ... well I was the youngest. I went when I was four. They went when they was five but they run back home. But apparently I went when I was four and stayed there.

R Mmmm

S But, er, it wasn't through missing school or anything like that at all.

R So you don't really know?

S No, no it's a, it's a mystery to me - even now I can enjoy sports. I can do lots of sports. I'm handy. You know handy jobs I can do in the house, you know I mean decorating, cupboards, building, anything to do with me hands. Anything like that you know. Arithmetic was all right at school. But it was just um reading and spelling, for some reason. Obviously to me they're the two that go together - reading and spelling. The other things was all right. Handwriting was all right. No trouble with that at all (p2). Perhaps if I'd been encouraged at home it would have helped, like I said. (p3) But other things at school I managed.

R Mmmm. What are your memories of school like?

S Er (p4). Not too bad except for the English class (laugh). I mean other than that I wasn't too bad. But there I was. It was forty words on the board and 'Right look at those. Right spell 'em.' You know, but my history and geography I like, um, I always got on all right with those. Naturally games I liked. But the rest of it - science, biology, I was all right.

R What about reading in those subjects? That didn't give you any problems.

S No, I think mainly because the teachers, from what I can remember, went through what you were reading at the time. You know, if you was reading a book the teacher would come down and help you over two or three words. But when you was doing English for some reason you'd be on your own (p1). You know the teacher wasn't worried about coming round and seeing if you was all right and helping you. You was on your own and you started to panic as soon as they said 'spelling'. You know you couldn't do a thing. You just - that same feeling come up and, um, your heart started to pound and you sweat. A terrible feeling you know. It's the only time I've ever felt anything like it before. But as soon as your mind gets to that stage that is it. It just goes blank completely and what bits you do know goes. This is it - everything goes (p4).

R Fine. Now we're going to look at the future. How do you think you'll know when you're ready to leave the class?

S (p6) Um (p2) Could be when somebody can dictate something from a newspaper and I can write it down and only make the odd mistake. And I'd feel that yeah, I've got it. You know I've grasped all the lessons and the work I've been doing previous.

R Mmmm

S Something like that where I'm writing something down and I know that I can look at it meself and think 'right, well I've made one mistake there' and I'd think you know 'Well I think I've got it now'. I'd know then.

R Fine. Do you think you'll go on to further classes?

S Would like to (p2). Yeah, now I would (p1)

R What sort of classes?

S Um (p3) Well, I think I'd like to go on and try for O level in English, I think to prove to myself that I'm there you know. That it would be for me inner self you know mainly. Where I think, yeah - now I've done it (laugh). I think I'd get great satisfaction out of that. (laugh)

R Good (p2) Since you started attending classes has what you want to do with your life changed in any way?

S (p2) No I don't think so, no.

R You haven't, um, changed your ambitions about the sort of job you want for example?

S No, no. The job I'm doing I've done for twenty-two years now. So I think I'm stuck with it.

R You're quite happy with your job?

S Yes I enjoy it. I enjoy it. I always have done you know. Um. Anything using me hands I enjoy you know. I still get the same feeling that I've done a good job even now that I had when I first started. To me that's what I meant to do. That's the one I'm meant to do you know, like you know. Naturally there's been some progress. Um. I've got me own department what I run. All right, I wouldn't, I wouldn't like to go right through not doing any work on the bench because as I say I enjoy it. To me if I started a load of office and paper work you know. Um, I couldn't do it you know. I'd sooner be on the bench working.

R When you say you couldn't do it, do you mean you could do it but you wouldn't do it?

S Oh, I could, but to me it would be a waste of time. Yeah.

R You mean?

S For me to sit down and do paper work all day when I could be out there making something, to me would be a waste of time. Oh yeah, I could do it but I don't think I would get any satisfaction out of it. In fact it would drive me to drink, I think you know. I couldn't stand being stuck in one place, you know, all the time. But give me a drawing and a sheet of metal and say 'make this' well that's fine. My ambition would be to work in a firm where they do prototypes. Where you'd do something that's never been done before, you know. I'd enjoy that where you, everyone's in the same boat and you start off thinking like, 'well we'll try this and we'll try it this way and see if we can do it'. You know, I'd enjoy that. Something like that. I'd enjoy sorting out the problems like that. I would enjoy one offs you know.

R Mmmm

S Well, I'm so used to it. Well I don't know any other work (laugh) Terrible isn't it?

R No, it's not terrible (p1) Do you think there has been an improvement in your reading and spelling?

S Yes

R Can you give me examples?

S Um (p2) I can write cheques out now (laugh) and pay the bills (laugh). No things like that really, Um. (p2) I enjoy sitting down reading now whereas I, you know, didn't enjoy it. Before I couldn't read or enjoy a newspaper. Whereas before I used to start to read and put it down. But now, you know, I enjoy sitting down and reading a newspaper, which to me, you know is fantastic, you know. Well to read a newspaper (laugh) but to me it's, you know, it's a hell of a lot (p4).

R Do you think this improvement has changed your life in any way?

S Really, just confidence mainly. A lot more confidence now. I've always been a bit (laugh) What can I say? (p3) I think mainly laughing and joking started when you had trouble reading and writing and spelling, you know. You sort of cover it up laughing about it you know. Making a joke in that sort of vein.

R Mmmm

S But now, um, the confidence is gushing out of me (laugh) No, well I prefer it now actually. For me to be sitting here now talking about reading and spelling. Well three year ago, two and a half year ago, no way. I wouldn't even have sat here with a tape recorder or talked about it at all. So it, you know, it has made a vast improvement. It certainly helps you to talk about it whereas before you tried to hide it, you know. Now you come into classes like this. "What are you doing tonight?" "Oh, I'm going to evening classes tonight". "What are you doing?" "Oh I'm doing English". Well for me to say that now instead of years ago moaning about it at night. I wouldn't even think about a night school because of that filling in a form. When I think about it now there's probably lots of things now that I would have done. You know the different clubs and that I would have joined probably. You see I do go now. I know if they give me a form to fill in I can fill it in quite easily. But before like, give you a form and you would shy away like, all the time. See in that respect, you know, see it's given me that. But, um, I'm (p1) I'm sitting here talking about it.

R Mmmm

S I think that's the main thing now. That and confidence. The confidence in myself and to do it, and to do anything now you know. I just don't care now, you know. Anything that some along - Yeah ! (laugh)

I'll do it! Before I used to you know. "I'm not sure, I'm not sure about that". But now, Yeah! you know. Probably it's (p2) I don't know, what I would have been like if I'd done reading and spelling at school (laugh) I would have been terrible. I'm bad enough now. I'd think I'd be worse.

R Thank you. That's nice. I've been asking you all these questions. Is there anything you'd like to askme?

S (p3) No I don't think so (laugh). Not really, no.

Table One shows responses obtained during interviews with thirteen students, taught by the interviewer. Interviews conducted Feb/April 1980).

Table Two Replies to each question are given individually.

N.B. The total may not be 13 in every case as sometimes respondents gave two reasons in an answer.

KEY

scl	school
c	confidence
sp	spelling
r	reading
w	writing
pron	pronunciation
y	yes
n	no

TABLE ONE Respondents replies to the interview schedule

QUESTION	STUDENT NO.	11	13	2
1(1)	What decided you to come for help?	TV	TV	scl refer
1(2)	How did you hear of the scheme?	TV	paper	scl
1(3)	How did your family feel about your joining the scheme?	spouse encouraged	spouse encourages	father encouraged mother didn't
1(4)	Was it reading, writing, spelling or all of these you felt you needed help with?	all	sp & r	all
1(5)	Before you came to the class can you remember what you imagined it would be like?	fear over all	scl	students mostly foreign
1(6)	Why did you decide you would like to be taught in a group?	scheme's idea	scheme's idea	no choice
1(7)	When you started what did you think you could get out of joining the scheme?	r. w. sp. & c.	sp. & c.	r. w. sp. & c.
1(8)	When you joined the scheme how long did you think it would take to reach your goal?	ages	no set time	5 yrs.
1(9)	Now, are your ideas about this different?	N	N	another 7 yrs.
2(1)	Have your ideas about classes/tutors changed with experience?	Y	Y	can't say
2(2)	Are you able to study at home?	Y	Y	Y
2(3)	Has coming to classes made a difference to what you do in your spare time? ...	Y	Y	Y
2(4)	Has coming to classes made a difference to what you do in your spare time for enjoyment?	read more	read more	less TV
2(5)	Since starting tuition are there ways you feel different e.g. at home, at work, with your mates?	more confident	more confident	more confident
3(1)	While you were at school do you think they knew at home that you had problems with your reading/writing/spelling?	Y did not help	N	Y
3(2)	Do you think other members of your family had difficulties with reading, writing, spelling	Y	Y	Y
3(3)	When you were at school can you remember when you first became aware of having reading/writing/spelling difficulties? ...	junior	infant	infant
3(4)	What do you think the reasons were?	home	don't know	home/ scl
3(5)	What did the school do about it?	junior nothing	secondary nothing	junior nothing
3(6)	How did the school help you?	extra lessons	extra lessons	extra lessons
3(7)	What are your memories of school like (pleasant or unpleasant) ...	unpleasant	both	both
4(1)	How do you think you'll know when you're ready to leave?	certain standards	certain standards	teacher says
4(2)	Do you think you'll go on to further classes?	Y	Y	Y
4(3)	Since you started attending classes has what you want to do with your life changed in any way?	N	N	N
5(1)	Do you think there has been an improvement in your reading/writing/spelling?	Y	Y	Y
5(2)	Do you think this improvement has changed your life in any way ...	little	vast	no difference

4	8	3	1	9	10	7	5	12	6	
paper	job	job	job	job	job	TV	job	TV	TV	1(1)
paper	library	paper & TV	wife	TV	TV	TV	TV	TV	TV	1(2)
spouse encouraged	spouse encouraged	never mentioned	spouse encouraged soc indifferent	family encouraged	spouse encouraged	family encouraged	spouse encouraged	spouse encouraged	mother encouraged	1(3)
sp	sp	all	sp	sp & r	sp	sp	all	sp	all	1(4)
fear over all	as it is	fear over all	scl	TV	TV	scl	no idea	TV	as it is	1(5)
no choice	no choice	company	not satis-fied 1/1	scheme's idea	company	company	scheme's idea	scheme's idea	not satis/ fied 1/1	1(6)
sp	sp & c	sp. & c. & pron.	sp	r & sp.	sp	sp. & c	sp. & c	sp	r. w. sp.	1(7)
ages	no set time	5 yrs.	ages	3 yrs.	no set time	6-12 weeks	ages	no set time	2/3 yrs.	1(8)
N	N	shorter	never	longer	N	never	another 2 yrs.	N	time irrelevent	1(9)
can't say	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	2(1)
N	N (but could)	Y	Y	Y	N	N (but could)	Y	N	N (but could)	2(2)
N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	2(3)
N	read more	read more	less TV	N	N	N	less TV	N	read better	2(4)
N	more confident	more confident	worse	N	more confident	N	more confident	more confident	N	2(5)
N	Y	Y	Y didn't help	Y	N	Y	N	Y didn't help	N	3(1)
Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	3(2)
infant	junior	junior	junior	secondary	secondary	infant	army	junior	secondary	3(3)
self	scl	self	home	scl	self/scl war	self	self/scl	self/scl home	self	3(4)
nothing	secondary nothing	nothing	nothing	junior nothing	junior nothing	secondary nothing	nothing	nothing	nothing	3(5)
nothing	extra lessons	nothing	nothing	extra lessons	extra lessons	extra lessons	nothing	nothing	nothing	3(6)
unpleasant	pleasant	both	unpleasant	unpleasant	unpleasant	both	pleasant	pleasant	pleasant	3(7)
certain standards	teacher says	teacher says	never	certain standards	never	certain standards	family pressure	depends on future plans	certain standards	4(1)
don't know	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	4(2)
N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	4(3)
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5(1)
no different	no different	vast	worse	no different	little	little	little	vast	little	5(2)

TABLE TWO

	TV	scl refer	paper	job
1(1) What decided you to come for help	5	1	1	6

	TV	scl	paper	library	spouse
1(2) How did you hear of the scheme?	8	1	3	1	1

1(3)

How did your family feel about you joining the scheme?

spouse encouraged	father encouraged mother did not	family encouraged	mother encouraged	spouse encour-aged, son indifferent	never mentioned
7	1	2	1	1	1

	all	spelling	spelling and reading
1(4) Was it reading, writing, spelling or all of these you felt you needed help with?	5	6	2

1(5)	fear over all	scl	TV as shown on	as it is	mostly foreign students	no idea
Before you came to the class can you remember what you imagined it would be like?	3	3	3	2	1	1

1(6)	scheme's idea	no choice	company	not satisfied 1/1
Why did you decide you would like to be taught in a group?	5	3	3	2

1(7)	reading writing spelling	r w s & c	sp	r & c	sp. & c	sp & c & pron.
When you started what did you think you would get out of joining the scheme?	1	2	4	1	4	1

1(8)	ages	no set time	5 yrs.	2 yrs.	6-12 weeks	3 yrs.
When you joined the scheme how long did you think it would take you to reach your goal?	4	4	2	1	1	1

1(9)	no	never	another 7yrs.	longer	shorter	another 2 yrs.	time irrel-evant
Now, are your ideas different?	6	2	1	1	1	1	1

2(1)	Yes	No	can't say
Have your ideas about classes/tutors changed with experience?	7	4	2

2(2)	Yes	No	No, but could
Are you able to study at home?	7	3	3

2(3)	Yes	No
Has coming to classes made a difference to what you do in your spare time?	6	7

2(4)	No	watch less TV	read more	less pub
Has coming to classes made a difference to what you do in your spare time for enjoyment?	5	3	5	1

2(5)	more confidence	worse	no different
Since starting tuition are there ways you feel different, e.g. at home, at work, with your mates?	8	1	4

3(1)	Yes	Yes did not help	No
While you were at school do you think they knew at home that you had difficulties with your reading/ writing/spelling?	5	3	5

3(2)	Yes	No
Do you think other members of your family had difficulties with reading/writing/ spelling?	8	5

3(3)	Infant	Junior	Secondary	Army
When you were at school can you remember when you first became aware of having reading/writing/spelling problems?	4	5	5	1

3(4)	home	scl.	self	don't know	war
What do you think the reasons were?	3	6	9	1	1

3(5)	nothing	junior nothing	secondary nothing
What did the school do about it?	6	4	3

3(6)	extra lessons	nothing
How did the school help you?	7	6

3(7)	pleasant	unpleasant	both
What are your memories of school like? (pleasant or unpleasant or both)	4	5	4

4 (1)	reach certain standard	never	when teacher says	family pressure	depends on future plans
How do you think you'll know when you're ready to leave?	6	2	3	1	1

4(2)	yes	no	don't know
Do you think you'll go on to further classes?	6	6	1

4(3)	yes	no
Since attending classes has what you want to do with your life changed in any way?	4	9

5(1)	yes
Do you think there has been an improvement in your reading/writing/spelling?	13

5(2)	little	vast	no different	worse
Do you think this improvement has changed your life in any way?	5	3	4	1

APPENDIX FIVE

General grid findings

The elements for the repertory grid were designed so that some other relevant information could emerge, in addition to the elements previous, present and ideal self.

Two groups, those who experience literacy difficulties and those who do not, were considered important and they were included as two elements: 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING HARD' and 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING COMES EASY'. It was felt that if respondents tended to polarize the two groups this may indicate an unrealistic appraisal of those with and without literacy difficulties. It was also considered useful to observe how closely the respondents rated the previous self and the group with literacy difficulties. It was felt that if they did not identify closely this may be a factor in their feeling able to come forward for tuition. There was very little polarization in either of the two samples. In the second sample 11 grids out of a total of 49 grids showed polarization, suggesting that most respondents construed the groups in a fairly realistic way.

Whilst most respondents viewed themselves negatively prior to tuition and saw themselves closely resembling the group 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING HARD', the identification was not uniformly close. However, it is only possible to speculate whether this was a factor in their coming forward for tuition.

Most respondents identify a close match between the ideal self and the group 'PEOPLE WHO FIND READING/WRITING/SPELLING COMES EASY'.

The element 'ME WITH STRANGERS' was included to try to establish how the respondent felt in day to day encounters with people who were neither workmates, friends, family or acquaintances. No clear pattern emerged for either sample.

The relationship with the family was divided into two separate elements: 'ME WITH MY PARTNER', 'ME WITH MY CHILDREN'. The reason for this, as stated earlier, was because during the interviews it became clear that some respondents were inhibited by the thought of their children discovering their literacy difficulties. A small minority of the first sample did not have children. In the second sample of 49, 29 did not have children. In both samples respondents with children tended to give positive ratings for this element, but those with older children included more negative ratings. This may be due to factors other than fear of the children discovering the parents literacy difficulties (as in the interviews). Such possible reasons were not probed as they are outside the range of this study.

In the first sample under half of the respondents did not have partners. In the second sample 17 respondents did not have partners. Those for whom this element was relevant gave generally positive ratings. There were only three exceptions to this. Grids 3 and 10 gave only negative ratings and grid 16 only gave 3s.

These high ratings are perhaps surprising, but it may reflect the pattern which emerged from the interviews. This showed that respondents had received positive encouragement from their partner; this may be an indication of a generally positive relationship.

The element 'ME AT WORK' was given a variable rating. No clear pattern emerged. Some enjoyed their work, others did not. In the second sample

31 respondents included positive ratings (4s or 5s) and only one grid (15) elicited only negative ratings.

The element on the grid which received the most consistently negative ratings from all respondents was 'FILLING IN FORMS/APPLYING FOR JOBS'. These situations are demanding of literacy skills and this negative finding is unsurprising. Where any positive ratings were given they tended to be on the constructs 'STICKS AT THINGS/GIVES UP' and 'REMEMBERS THINGS/ DOESN'T REMEMBER THINGS.

The elements previous, present and ideal self are discussed in detail in the grid chapter.

TABLE OF DATA FOR SECOND SAMPLE

Student Number	Sex	Age	Length of tuition (yrs)	Closeness between present/ ideal self	% shift towards ideal self	I	P	C	N	A	NEG	R
22	M	25	1	96	24	44	23	23	3	IU	N	41
47	M	29	2	89	54	38	27	30	9	M	N	28
4	M	28	1¾	85	78	15	6	2	9	E	N	29
41	M	20	1½	85	46	34	24	31	7	E	N	23
21	M	31	5	85	32	38	29	27	13	M	N	29
27	F	24	1	82	18	31	33	33	8	E	N	18
44	F	19	1	78	25	26	24	24	17	E	Y	22
3	M	30	2½	78	14	30	8	15	15	M	Y	35
24	M	20	2	78	11	31	19	19	5	M	N	32
20	M	26	3	78	46	28	27	24	6	E	N	21
11	M	19	2	75	25	26	24	18	11	IU	Y	22
39	M	33	1½	75	33	45	25	24	4	M	Y	40
19	F	19	1	75	9	25	13	27	22	IU	Y	18
25	M	47	4	71	21	14	19	18	1	M	N	15
12	F	47	1	67	60	37	26	28	14	M	Y	29
43	M	23	1	67	35	34	20	25	6	E	N	29
46	M	17	1	67	28	44	16	13	9	IU	N	48
23	M	18	1	67	25	25	16	8	9	IU	Y	29
5	M	22	2	64	50	24	16	44	14	IS	N	0
31	M	18	2¼	64	39	26	27	8	5	IU	N	19
40	M	32	3	64	0	41	29	28	5	M	Y	32
26	F	26	1	60	46	31	15	15	15	E	N	36
37	M	35	1	60	39	33	29	31	9	E	N	22
6	F	35	2½	57	15	34	28	26	14	M	Y	26
30	M	30	3	57	40	22	16	20	12	M	Y	22
33	M	29	2	57	32	16	34	1	9	M	Y	2
35	M	37	5	57	50	35	35	16	10	E	N	20
13	M	18	1	53	7	43	31	28	16	E	Y	32
16	F	40	3	53	50	42	25	30	15	M	Y	32
49	F	26	2	53	21	30	23	24	10	E	Y	26
14	F	23	4	50	50	43	13	39	23	M	Y	29

Student Number	Sex	Age	Length of Tuition	Closeness between present/ ideal self	% shift towards ideal self	I	P	C	N	A	NEG	R
48	F	40	1½	50	43	38	9	21	11	E	N	37
1	F	35	1½	50	50	30	24	18	14	IS	Y	26
38	F	55	2	46	43	29	30	30	21	IU	Y	19
7	M	53	1	46	18	39	37	36	22	M	Y	22
28	M	33	1	46	25	28	23	33	14	IU	Y	15
42	M	30	3	46	29	25	32	30	17	M	Y	13
32	M	19	1½	42	25	29	43	34	14	IU	Y	6
15	M	34	3	42	39	31	29	34	20	M	N	17
45	M	17	1	42	3	32	26	23	13	IS	Y	26
50	F	31	1	42	21	39	6	17	10	M	Y	42
2	M	32	2	39	25	32	30	13	14	IS	Y	22
36	F	24	1	39	18	45	35	43	19	IS	Y	22
34	M	25	1	39	29	40	24	29	13	M	Y	31
18	M	22	4	39	11	28	31	29	13	M	Y	17
29	M	24	1	39	4	34	28	30	24	IS	Y	24
8	F	24	1	35	0	18	31	22	11	M	Y	7
52	F	45	1	35	35	38	40	33	14	M	N	18
10	F	44	3½	21	21	26	39	32	19	IS	Y	7

KEY :

I = Internality)
P = Powerful Others) on Levenson's IPC Scale
C = Chance)

N = Neuroticism as measured by Eysenck's P.I.

A = Attribution for literacy failure given on self report questions.

E = External

M = Mixed

IU = Internal Unstable

IS = Internal Stable Global

NEG= continuing negative perceptions of self (Yes/No)

R = Dominance score for Levenson's IPC (see statistics chapter for full explanation)

N.B. Students arranged in order to closeness of the present self to the ideal self.

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